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The wild stampede out of Lebanon

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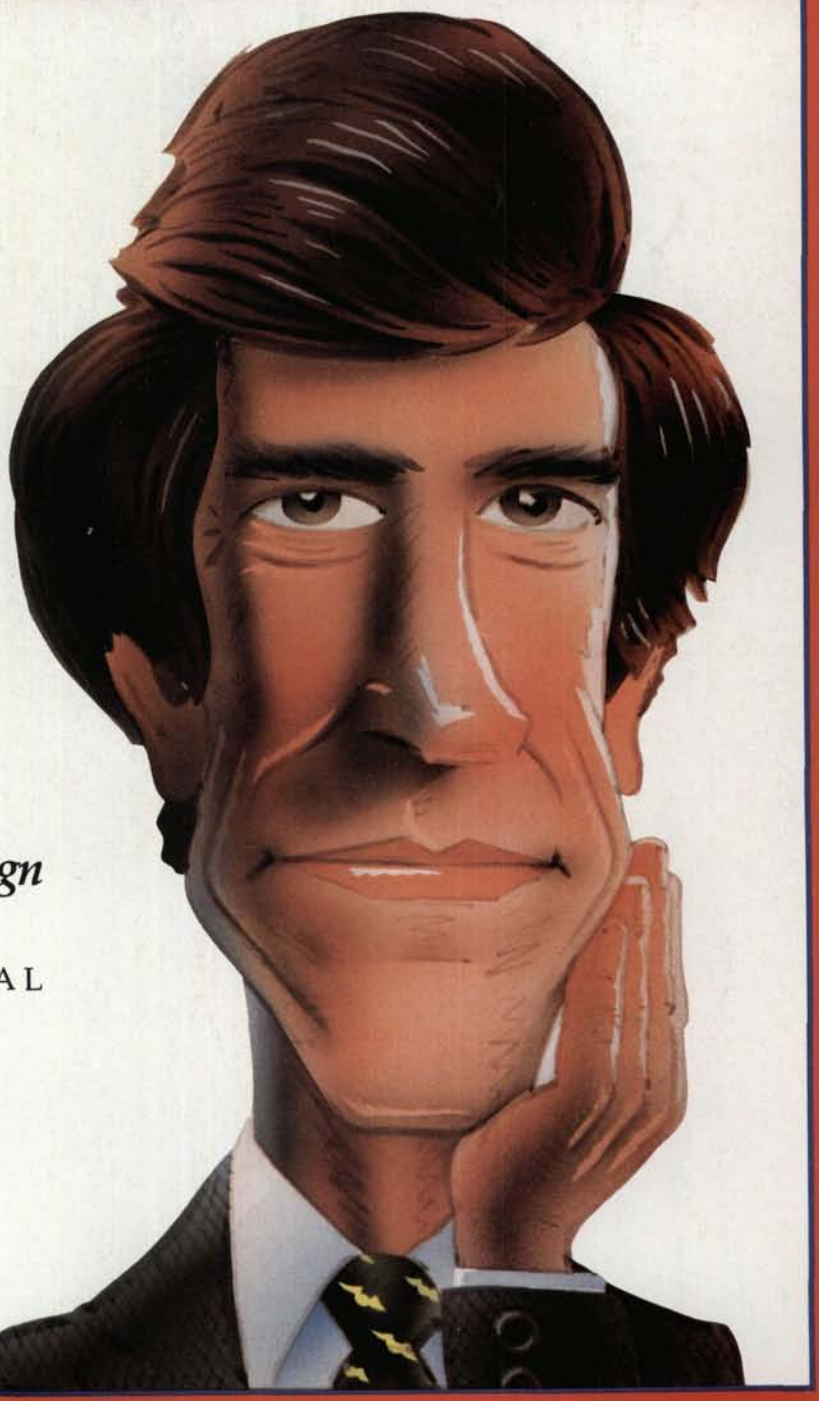
THE NEW REPUBLIC

Gary Hart's Big Chill

Generational politics in a Presidential campaign

By SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL



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LIFE AND DEATH DECISIONS

To the editors:

In "Decisions of Death" (TNR, December 12), David Bruck charges that some murderers are sentenced to death while many others, equally guilty, are not, and that black murderers of white victims are more likely to be sentenced to death than black murderers of black victims. These charges may be correct, but Mr. Bruck draws inferences from them which logically and morally are not.

For Mr. Bruck, distribution of the death penalty to a few murderers, capriciously selected, argues for its abolition. But if something is badly distributed, surely the distribution is at fault, not what is being distributed. Or does Mr. Bruck contend that maldistribution is inherent in the death penalty? I can't see why it would be.

Capriciousness and irrelevant discrimination in the distribution of the death penalty to convicted murderers—and even in the distribution of fines to people who double park—should be corrected, for they outrage our desire for equality, and, above all, allow guilty persons to escape deserved punishment. But Mr. Bruck argues (as illogically as did Justice Douglas) that because many others have not been sentenced to death, we should spare the few murderers who have been. How do these murderers become less guilty because many others deserving of the death penalty have not been caught, convicted, or sentenced to death? Only some of the many burglars and muggers that infest New York are ever caught, convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment. Should we let them go because so many others escaped the penalty they deserve?

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG
New York, New York

To the editors:

David Bruck's informative exposé of the realities of capital punishment omits the dehumanization of those who must carry out or witness the execution process. We create additional killers and accomplices by inflicting the penalty that is supposed to deter and punish those very crimes.

IRIS DRIMMER
Cleveland, Ohio

To the editors:

I want to thank TNR for David Bruck's "Decisions of Death." For a long time I was one of those citizens who failed to see beyond the issue of capital punishment to the real crime—the terrifying and racist "process of selection."

The senselessness of our judicial system—not to mention the unsound rulings of many of our judges—is more than apparent in Cook County's Criminal Court in Chicago, where I was trained to be a legal reporter. It wasn't long before my colleagues and I began talking about so-and-so "getting" the death penalty the way most people talk about the weather. Worst of all, deep down I think we were pleased. Now, horrified, I look back and ask myself how I would have reacted if those faced

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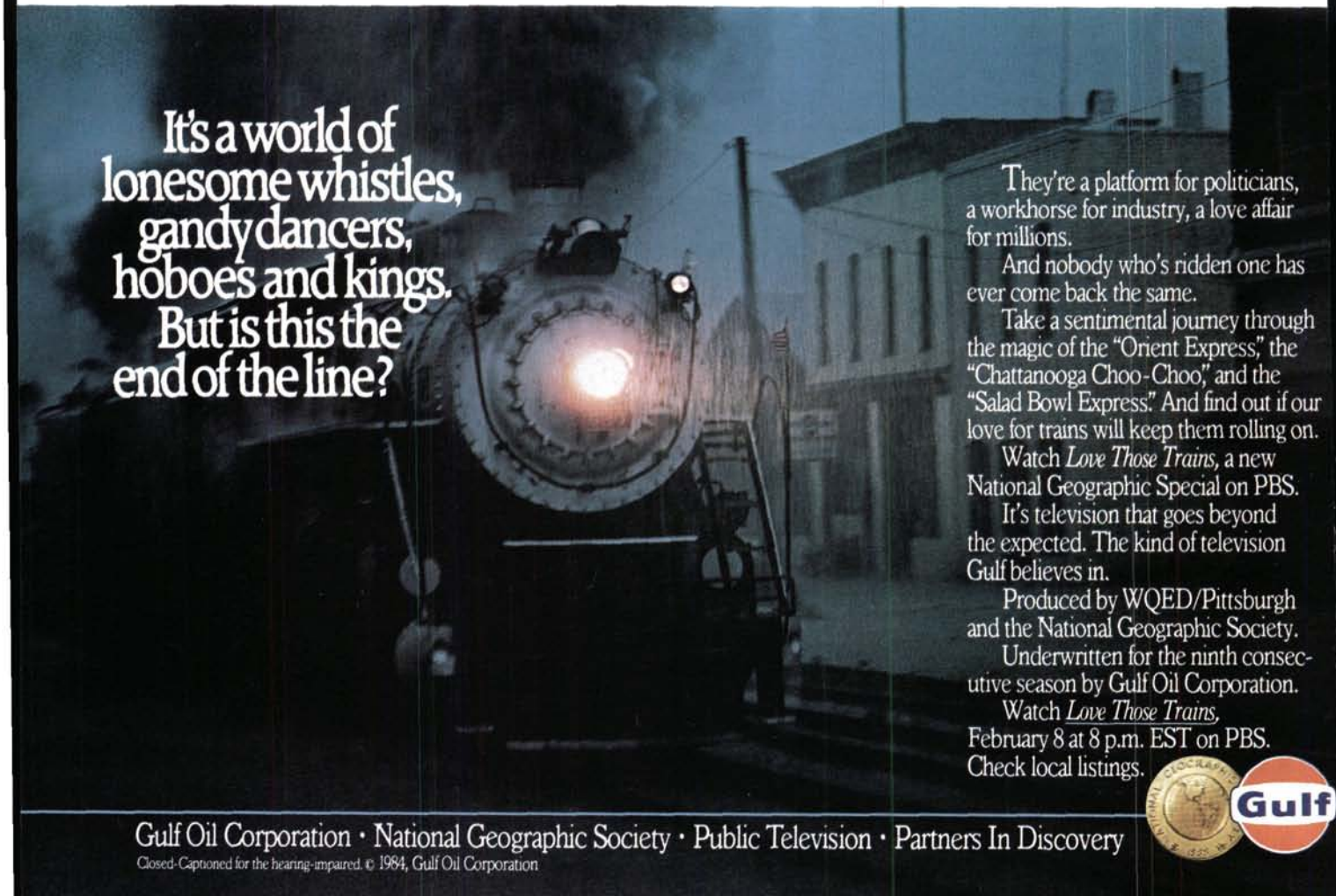
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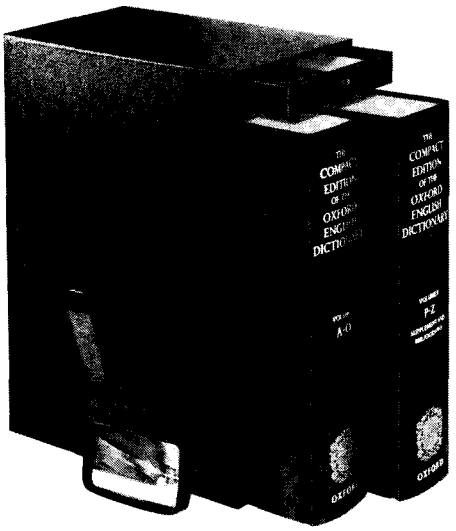

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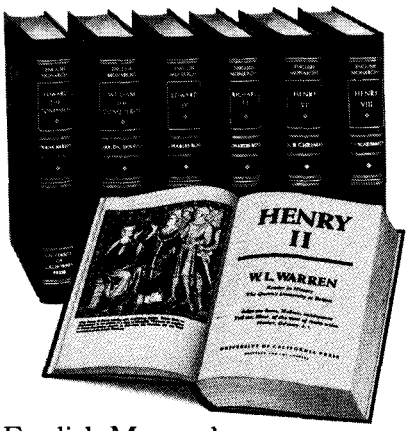

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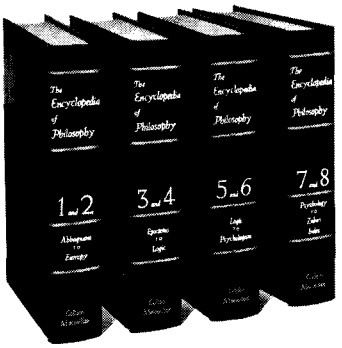

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with the death penalty had been white, for they almost never were.

I can only wonder and shudder at how unwilling most of us are to become outraged, even when the issue is not simply black and white, but, as Mr. Bruck reveals, black versus white.

MARY C. ARENDT
Chicago, Illinois

To the editors:

In his analysis of the death penalty in America, David Bruck argues that capital punishment is invalid due to its racially discriminatory impact. I suggest such reasoning proves too much. If, as I suspect is true, juries and judges impose *all* penalties more harshly on blacks than on whites (or more harshly when the victim is white), Mr. Bruck's analysis would lead to the conclusion that all criminal sanctions are invalid.

There may be very good reasons for opposing the death penalty, but racially discriminatory impact will not suffice. I am afraid the best we can do is mandate racially neutral criteria in our sentencing, as called for by the Supreme Court in *Furman* v. *Georgia*. As Woodrow Wilson pointed out, the clearest principle of representative government is that "somebody must be trusted." Judges and juries may not be perfect arbiters of justice, but they are the best our Constitution allows, and a good deal better, I suspect, than any of the alternatives.

C. EDWARD FLETCHER III
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To the editors:

The crux of David Bruck's argument against capital punishment seems to be that if someone somewhere does not receive the death sentence upon being convicted of murder, then no one anywhere may be so sentenced. He rather cleverly shifts the focus of inquiry from the specific murder committed and the appropriate punishment for that particular murderer to concerns about how prosecutors and juries in other jurisdictions handle unrelated murder cases involving other defendants.

In his article Mr. Bruck equates the moral position of society in its claimed "randomness" of condemning convicted murderers to that of the murderers themselves as they stalk at random their innocent prey. This argument is particularly disingenuous when made by a lawyer such as Mr. Bruck who specializes in challenging the state's attempts to obtain the death penalty for convicted murderers. In large measure, the successes of such lawyers account for the "randomness" he now decries.

ROBERT J. STEIGMANN
Circuit Judge
Urbana, Illinois

REICH VS. OLSON

To the editors:

Robert B. Reich, in his review of Mancur Olson's *The Rise and Decline of Nations* ("Why Democracy Makes Economic Sense," TNR, December 19), fails to comprehend the dynamics of human nature discussed by Mr. Olson and therefore misses the link between the frustration of factional self-interest and the development of common values. Mr. Reich's ill-founded categories of "political man" and "economic man" ignore the significance of Mr. Olson's conclusion that members of a group act in their own self-interest as readily as a free individual.

When Mr. Reich argues against distinctions between political and economic institutions and behavior, he has fundamentally misconstrued the purpose and concerns of liberal democracy. Democracy is a system of government designed to protect the political and economic freedom of factions, and is *not* a system designed to provide for political and economic control *by* factions. The economic problems described by Mr. Olson are the result of too much economic control of political behavior, which has brought too much political control of economic behavior. As Mr. Reich himself points out, this shift from economic freedom to political control has meant that a system which allowed for the place of factions motivated by self-interest has been replaced by a system jammed by self-interested factions motivated to press illegitimate advantages in the political sphere. The consequences, as Mr. Olson describes and Mr. Reich reiterates, are that competition between free economic factions fueled by self-interest has been shut down, and the engines of economic prosperity have been stifled, because of the political collusion of entrenched economic factions. And yet, although Mr. Olson's book has documented the fact that this increased politicization of the economy has hampered prosperity—the ultimate common good—Mr. Reich has called for even *greater* political control of economic activity!

Unfortunately, Mr.Reich does not seem to understand that what he has in mind is not greater democracy, but a tyranny—not only of narrow factions—but of the majority.

GREGORY RANSOM
Seattle, Washington

'TESTAMENT' TESTIMONY

To the editors:

I feel compelled to answer Stanley Kauffmann's rhetorical question about the movie *Testament*: why was it made? ("Late Fall Roundup," TNR, November 28).

The movie was not made to show the terrible effects of nuclear war, but to get us to begin asking ourselves the right questions. No simple solutions. Just ones that have a chance of working. All the facts that I've read couldn't bring the necessity to me—and couldn't fire commitment in me—the way watching a mother lose every person that mattered to her could.

BROOKE PORTMANN
Minneapolis, Minnesota

To the editors:

Stanley Kauffmann thinks *Testament* couldn't have been to persuade because "no one except a maniac is in favor of a nuclear war."

How would one decide if a civilization were "in favor" of nuclear war? One method might be to notice that the world is producing the means for that outcome. Anthropologists viewing the earth from a great distance might submit a report something like this: "The race which dominates this planet does not meet the needs for food and comfort of its own kind. Rather it expands its wealth on the production of the means to commit racial suicide."

It may be that, as individuals, none of us favors nuclear war, but each of us complies with our race's strides toward that outcome. Films like *Testament* may startle more of us into the realization of where we seem to be headed.

CAROL SCHRAFT CAUGHEY
Enumclaw, Washington

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FROM WASHINGTON

DRUNK ON SOBRIETY

In one of his recent Saturday radio chats, President Reagan declared that drunk driving is as great a threat to America as a foreign enemy. Drunk driving makes a nearly ideal political issue. There aren't many ways a politician can please so many and offend so few without even proposing to spend a lot of money. The opposition lacks a constituency. As the final report of the President's Commission on Drunk Driving put it, "No one is in favor of drunk driving, not even drunk drivers."

But drunk driving is not a social problem terribly amenable to political solutions. What can we do about it? The President's Commission has many sound but unexciting suggestions for better law enforcement. Changing public attitudes is the best hope, and it seemed to me over the Christmas holidays that all the recent publicity really has made drivers more careful. But you can't legislate attitudes. Looking for something you *can* legislate, the sobriety lobby has zeroed in on raising the drinking age to 21.

President Reagan supports this proposal but, typically, opposes federal government action because he feels it is a matter that should be left to the states. The Presidential Commission, hypocritically, opposes a national drinking age on federalist grounds, but urges a cutoff of federal highway funds to any state that doesn't go along. In fact, the drinking age is a classic example of something that should *not* be left to the states, since lack of uniformity is a large part of the problem. Right now drinking ages vary, in no particular pattern, between 18 and 21. Twenty-year-olds will drive a long way, if necessary, to a state where they can drink. Trouble is, then they have to drive home. But this problem could be addressed just as well by the solution I would prefer: a national law lowering the drinking age to 18.

It would be silly to present this as a civil rights issue, involving fundamental questions of either discrimination or freedom. Most people under 21 become people over 21, and even more would do so if they were forbidden to drink. Apart from libertarian extremists, we're all willing to tolerate restrictions on freedom for the public good, even for the paternalistic purpose of protecting people from themselves. Young drivers, both drunk and sober, kill themselves and others (though mostly themselves) in disproportionate numbers. The National Safety Council estimates that 730 lives a year could be saved with a national drinking age of 21.

On the other hand, it's equally silly to be absolutist in the other direction and say that any burden on freedom is justified if it will save 730 lives. Far more than 730 traffic deaths were avoided in 1982 by the recession, which led to less driving, but nobody would say we should therefore avoid prosperity.

A national mandatory seat-belt law would save thirteen thousand lives a year, but somehow that proposal gets people's libertarian juices flowing in a way the higher drinking age does not. Why the difference? Obviously one reason is that drunken drivers endanger others besides themselves (though the fatality figures would be far less alarming if they only counted innocent victims). But there are two other reasons. First is a failure of empathy. Most people won't be affected by a higher drinking age. Second, there's a sense that drinking has no positive value, and freedom to drink needn't be weighed in any social cost-benefit analysis.

A Gallup Poll shows that 77 percent of the population favor a uniform drinking age of 21. Not surprisingly, the majority increases with age. But even a 54 percent majority of 18-to-21-year-olds say they favor raising the drinking age to 21. How can this be, when other polls show that the vast majority of high school seniors do drink occasionally, if not to excess? Do they plan to stop if the law is changed? Unlikely. The answer, I think, is that teenagers, like other people, switch into an artificial civic mode of thought when engaged in public policy questions. They become intoxicated with high-mindedness—drunk on sobriety—and their judgment is not to be trusted.

The National Safety Council, for example, passes out a speech for business executives to give in their local communities which begins, "The world probably would be a better place if no one drank alcoholic beverages." Oh, please. Drinking in moderation—which is what most people, even teenagers, do—is one of life's pleasures. Sensible public policy in a free society takes the positive value of pleasure into account, even a minor pleasure with no civic benefit. Prohibition was a mistake not just because it was unenforceable, but because it was wrong on principle.

Prohibition for 18-to-21-year-olds is an easier case to make than prohibition in general. The imposition on individual freedom is only temporary, and the potential social benefit is disproportionately large. But even so, that imposition deserves some consideration in the cost-benefit analysis.

After all, about 99.4 percent of 18-to-21-year-olds are *not* involved in alcohol-related traffic accidents every year. If the United States Congress compiled the same record, there would be fewer than three drunken accidents a year involving members of Congress, a standard the national legislature would be hard pressed to meet.

Promoters of age-21 laws say they really don't aspire to prevent younger people from drinking; they just want to discourage it. Indeed, their most optimistic forecasts are that only about a fifth of drink-related traffic deaths in the 18-to-21 age group would be avoided by making drinking by this group illegal. The fact that a law will be widely disobeyed doesn't make it wrong. On the other hand, it's no defense of a law restricting freedom to say that most people will ignore it.

Many states lowered their drinking age during the Vietnam War, on the theory that if you're old enough to fight and die for your country, you're old enough to drink. This argument still strikes me as hard to answer, especially these days when young Americans are dying for their country again, at President Reagan's behest. Maybe we make an exception for soldiers. But what about policemen, Olympic athletes, garbagemen, even college students—it's ridiculous to tell these people they shouldn't have a beer or two on Saturday night.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JANUARY 23, 1984

THE PANIC OF '84

There are many lessons to be learned from Lebanon, but this week's lesson is about the injurious effect that politics may have on foreign policy. A democracy, to be sure, cannot conduct a foreign policy without the consent and the comprehension of its citizens. Ours is not a political system designed for princes who can tend to the affairs of state more or less by their own lights. Our statesmen must include in their strategic reckonings what they call "domestic factors." There is great wisdom in this. We are saved from the consequences of unlimited state power and the fantasies of unrestrained rulers. Still, if our system of statesmanship is too little designed for princes, it is too much designed for pollsters. Or so it now seems. There is panic in Washington these days, panic in the corridors of power and in the aisles of Congress. The panic is over Lebanon. And it is not based only upon an analysis of what will happen there. It is based also upon an analysis of what will happen here—that is to say, of how American policy in Lebanon, which is an important part of American policy toward a region of supreme historical importance, will play politically.

Consider the Administration itself, which has authored that policy. Second thoughts hang like mistletoe in the White House. Whether or not the President has changed his mind, his counselors have plainly changed theirs. They are looking at the consequences not in Lebanon but at the polling places, where the merits of foreign policy will be decided. White House "pragmatists" are afraid of how this will play in the coming election campaign. Congressional Republicans are also in a panic. In the Senate they are afraid of jeopardizing their newly won majority, and the House Republican leader, Robert Michel, has joined the stampede to "reassess" our Lebanon policy. Senators Tower and Warner have just headed off to the Middle East to find more facts. Just what facts are they unclear about?

And the pols have pals in the Pentagon, generals and admirals who are prepared for a big glory war in Europe and for a bigger nuclear war everywhere. They are ready to fight anywhere except where we may have to fight. Of course the military is also afraid that, if it is sent out to fight, the home front will soon be deserted. It is an understandable fear.

The Administration is to blame not only for allowing the White House political apparatus, the Pentagon, and now its Congressional wing, to undermine their own President's policy, but also for allowing a general erosion of popular support by poorly articulating exactly what our goals are. The original "peacekeeping mission"—a euphemism for saving Yasir Arafat and then protecting the Palestinians he left behind—quickly changed into something very different when it became clear that the central Lebanese government was being challenged militarily by Syria and its proxies. At that point, the American role changed into one of trying to help defend that government against Syria et al. The Administration refused to acknowledge this new role, preferring to delude itself and the American people. The dishonest insistence that the Marines were there merely as peacekeepers helped confuse and disorient the public, which rightly wondered how we could be peacekeepers if there was no peace to be kept. The case for what we were actually doing—trying to help create conditions for peace by supporting a weak pro-Western government—was made both badly and late.

The last party to the process of domestic demoralization, we note with regret, is the Democrats. A political party out of power is customarily spoken for on public policy by the last person to have carried its banner. But like the Republicans after the Goldwater debacle, the Democratic Party after its drubbings in 1972 and 1980 informally but firmly denied the mantle of titular leadership (which is really the moral authority to speak on its behalf), first to George McGovern and then to Jimmy Carter. In the absence of a legitimately designated leader of the national party, and with the Senate's Democratic minority bereft of a commanding analytic voice on foreign policy, circum-

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stance contrived to put House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill forward as the tribune of the opposition. And the Speaker, so adept as a politician and parliamentarian, so sound on questions of domestic policy, is over his head as soon as he must grapple with matters beyond our shores. (Tip's idea of foreign policy is a St. Patrick's Day parade.) But the shallowness of the Speaker's grasp of international conflict does not set him apart, at least not during the long prelude to elections, from the bulk of his Congressional colleagues, and certainly not from those competing for the convention nod. Their eyes are now riveted on the relatively small number of party activists who will decide the Iowa caucus and other fractional forums which will help give us the Democratic nominee. Pity the man ultimately chosen to lead this party against Mr. Reagan; how quickly and completely he will have to shed the garb he wore to win the nomination in order to have the slightest chance of winning the election!

BUT LEADERSHIP is leadership, and Mr. O'Neill is now and for the next months the leader. His most revealing moments were over the invasion of Grenada: first for it, then against it, then for it again. Since the party, or at least its leadership, seems stuck with such conflicting instincts, it has concocted a compromise between the two which, like many compromises, turns out to exacerbate the problem it was designed to remedy. In Grenada as in Lebanon, the compromise was to support the President's decision to send troops, but only to support his decision for a limited amount of time. This formula, contrived by Senators McGovern and Hatfield for Vietnam, would have established a deadline for the withdrawal of American troops. It had the virtue of seeming not to be precipitate. From the point of view that saw the war as justified, the maneuver was a cloak for surrender. From the point of view that saw the war as both unjustified and doomed to failure, what about the morality of dooming the G.I.s (and the Vietnamese) who would be killed after the withdrawal was set but before the deadline date? One thing was certain: knowing that only time separated it from victory, the adversary would have no reason to concede anything to anyone, which, in fact, it didn't. The McGovern-Hatfield legislation didn't pass, but its spirit lived on.

The contrivance of a deadline date for withdrawal set long in advance, by now contained in the War Powers Act, has been exhumed for Grenada and Lebanon. In Grenada, however, the deadline would not be more than a cosmetic expression of the Democrats' aversion to arms and their factional habits. The Administration's policy in Grenada met with swift success, and the removal of the troops (some of them to Lebanon, in fact) was begun almost before the legislated time clock started ticking. Grenada was easy, and it was popular. Not so Lebanon, where the stakes are, of course, much greater and the circumstances certainly more complex and even daunting. Almost no one has denied that it is in the interest of the United States; in the interest of peace in the region; in the interest of the Lebanese people, however divided; in the interest of the oft-cited "moderate" Arab regimes in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait; and in the interest of our other allies, including Egypt and Israel, that the mass-murdering Syrian junta and its Soviet patron not be permitted to put Lebanon into their camp. To be sure, very few Americans recognized these as interests when the Israelis were winning them for us during the 1982 war, with the result that we stopped the Israelis in their tracks. But because the goals were finally so compelling, we and our European confederates have ended up trying to do from a position of relative weakness what the Israelis were doing from a position of relative strength. And despite the impediments and the lost momentum, there were some signs of serious progress. The Lebanese Army showed itself to be a rather less ridiculous fighting and policing force than we had been told, and did this without very much help from its American and European friends. The duly elected Gemayel government, moreover, was beginning to make the necessary accommodations to the sectarian balance in Lebanon without which even the minimum stability required for civil life is impossible. The complaints from the Democrats that the progress made has not been fast or far-reaching enough are, if not just insincere caviling, downright petulant. In any event, these grievances about the pace and depth of change show how shallow—and shallow in a distinctively American way—is the critics' understanding of the tempestuous currents of mistrust that crisscross Lebanese society. Anyone who expects faster change just doesn't know what he is talking about. And on this Ronald Reagan is far more sophisticated than his opposition.

STILL, great progress was made, the greatest being in getting the governments in Beirut and Jerusalem to agree on the modalities of an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. There remained the goal of a similar arrangement with Damascus, whose troops had been there since 1976. Of course, the Syrians didn't want to leave, though for months many in Washington were sure they would. The big question then became: Is there a way to persuade the Syrians to leave? And a lesser question: Is there a way to persuade the Syrians and their suicidal Iranian and other Shiite jihadnik comrades to refrain from terrorist violence in that part of Lebanon not directly under Syrian occupation? There may be ways—and measured ways—to do this, to convince the Syrians that the costs and the risks of their violent mischief may be too high. If anything, probably, our measures were too timid. Much of the elite in the opinion industry and the Democrats in Congress set about so constricting Administration policy in Lebanon that the Syrians quickly understood that the more rabid and intransigent they remained, the sooner the pressures of U.S. domestic and electoral politics would undercut and perhaps even scuttle the American and European presence, and with that scuttle also the prospect of even a rudimentarily independent Lebanese government.

Partly out of ignorance of what would be required, partly out of fear of the then-small, but articulate, domestic

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opposition, partly out of deference to the obstinate illusions of the professional *Arabisants* in official Washington, the Administration paralyzed itself in dealing with the warlike situation in Lebanon. The Marines were never there simply as peacekeepers, and in saying they were the Administration was either unforgivably naive or deliberately deceitful. The American troops probably should have been Army regulars rather than Marines, since the Marines, who are a strike force, give the impression of being transients. Whatever the identity of our soldiers, there should have been more of them, and they should have been patrolling rather than hunkering down near an airport they can't under the present constraints keep open, waiting passively to be assaulted. And of course their weapons should have been loaded, so that they had half a chance when they had to fight or even simply to fight back. There is something hypocritical in the Congressional hunt for a scapegoat for the massacre of the Marines when it was, in some measure, the insincere rhetorical demands of the Congressional opposition that caused the Administration to deploy the Marines in such a tentative, and thus increasingly vulnerable, fashion.

The legislatively mandated eighteen-month limit to the achievement of our goals in Lebanon suggested to the Syrians that they might hasten our departure by making our stay more painful, and the reaction in the United States to the killing of 241 Marines in one terrorist attack is proof they were correct. For where Tip O'Neill was once willing to permit our troops eighteen months in the effort to attain formidable ends, he is now willing to permit them only six months. Walter Mondale, the leading Democratic aspirant to steward the nation's destiny, has at least taken Mr. O'Neill's problematic reasoning to its logical conclusion: he has called for the immediate withdrawal of our Marines from Lebanon to be carried out over forty-five days. (Why forty-five days, by the way? Why not thirty days or sixty? With such nonsensical precision is the currency of our politics measured.)

MR. MONDALE did have the grace not to claim that this suggested withdrawal would in some way help us achieve our purposes there. His position and the way he came to it are otherwise without merit. Four days before his withdrawal demand, he had said that the 1,800 Marines now in Lebanon should *not* be withdrawn. What intervened between the candidate's clinging "to the view that our Marines should . . . maintain their position in Lebanon," according to a detailed report in the *Boston Globe* by its scrupulous Washington correspondent Curtis Wilkie, was that "Mondale came under pressure from many of his followers to speak out against the mission." Whatever elaborate post hoc rationale Mr. Mondale may improvise in the future for his new position, it will be clear that nothing particularly deep or thoughtful motivated it beyond temporary and, at that, marginal, political advantage.

Both the Speaker and the candidate retreated from their previous positions in the aftermath of the release of the special Pentagon report on culpability for the deaths of the Marines in Beirut. It was a curious report in at least two ways. First, it spoke ahistorically about state-sponsored terrorism as a "new" phenomenon. Where has our military been these last years in a world where innocent civilians in peaceful cities in uninvolved countries have been routinely put at jeopardy by terrorists trained, supplied, financed, and deployed by various Communist or Arab states? No wonder our military was unprepared.

The second strange aspect of the report borders on military insubordination. The officers were asked for a military or technical appraisal of what went wrong in Beirut; what they also brought forward was their political opinion about how to deal with the political situation in Lebanon. We suppose it's possible they did so at the behest of Secretary Weinberger as part of his intra-bureaucratic struggle against our present Middle Eastern policy; but that is no more than speculation. In any case, it is a dangerous precedent that many liberals have ignored in their desperation for allies against Mr. Reagan. We had thought President Truman made it clear when he fired General MacArthur that generals should keep their political opinions to themselves. For the military to think it is entitled to set political policy is out of keeping with our Constitution and our entire tradition. Yet it is this attempted usurpation of roles at the top of the military class behind which Mr. O'Neill and Mr. Mondale are now hiding.

THE STAKES remain high. "A withdrawal without securing one's minimal objective," we wrote three weeks ago, "has only one name: defeat." If the stampede of Congressional Republicans and Democrats succeeds in reversing Administration policy—and this is an Administration, after all, not entirely indifferent to electoral calculations—it will be a defeat that, at least in part, we will have handed ourselves. And what about those "moderate" Arab states that are always ready to over-read and over-interpret our failing determination? They have already begun to adjust to the new realities of a possible American withdrawal by accommodating to Syria's impending long-sought dominion in Lebanon, to the resulting increase in Soviet influence, and to the lift given by developments to the fanatic Moslem revival out of Tehran—just about everything we had sought to avert. And will those who are now pushing a policy that really does imperil the King of Jordan and the King of Saudi Arabia, that imperils the "special relationship" of these kings with the U.S., henceforth forgo pressing Israel precisely in behalf of the significance of these special relationships?

Flora Lewis, in *The New York Times*, has tallied the price of a withdrawal well. That price, she wrote, "would be far higher than any yet paid in lives and treasure. Some 60 killed and over 200 wounded in two and a half days, when French troops abandoned two small checkpoints, should give forewarning of the immediate aftermath. Fighting would undoubtedly spread much more widely. All states in the region, Israel as well as the Arab nations, and terrorists practically everywhere would conclude that U.S.

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promises mean more trouble, not safety, for those who accept them, opportunity for those who defy Washington. . . . It would be . . . a disaster of the magnitude of the collapse of Iran into revolutionary frenzy." It is our view that this prospect of carnage and disintegration, of which the terrorist activity conducted under the aegis of the Syrian occupation army is only an auguring, should propel us to intensify our efforts in Lebanon, and not be an excuse for retreat from moral responsibilities that once were axiomatic.

Lebanon is a great test for the political class of the United States. Our country will pay for the fecklessness of the Administration and the cynicism of the opposition. Their message to the world now is that the United States may fight only easy three-day wars, and that any struggle more arduous in which terrorism is used against us is beyond our capacity. What a message that is to the tyrants and aggressors of the world.

JESSE'S STUNT

Jesse Jackson did it. He brought Robert Goodman, the Navy flyer shot down over Lebanon, home from Damascus. We are delighted for Lieutenant Goodman. By all the evidence he is a courageous, intelligent, and honorable officer. Dragooned into the media circus that Reverend Jackson conducted on his Damascus trip, Lt. Goodman kept his head and his dignity. After having been made to sit in Syrian custody for a month, he was made to sit, after his release, at the news conference arranged by Reverend Jackson in Damascus before their return home, where he served as a kind of prop while the candidate expounded his views on the moral, political, and theological dimensions of what he had just wrought. As the cameras rolled, Lt. Goodman took this all in stride, and distinguished himself in his responses to the few questions that Reverend Jackson permitted to be directed past himself. When asked about his treatment, Lt. Goodman, knowing he was still on Syrian soil but not wanting to give his captors the homage that had been bestowed on them by Reverend Jackson, replied that for the first four days he had been treated like a "P.O.W. in Vietnam"—(a diplomatic way of saying "badly"—and then suddenly treated very well for the rest of his imprisonment. When asked why, he responded that he could only speculate, but that he thought the Syrians had concluded it was in their interest to treat him well. Even in the euphoria of his release he kept his cool, refusing to engage in the grotesque celebration of Syrian humanitarianism that characterized Reverend Jackson's remarks.

Our joy at seeing this admirable young man return home is tempered only by the knowledge that he has brought home with him Reverend Jackson and his self-promotional circus. We will now be subjected to Reverend Jackson's endless reiterations of the lessons of this stunt, namely that one must transcend, as he and Mr. Assad had transcended, the political plane to reach the moral plane at which "the cycle of pain" that characterizes our policy in Lebanon can be broken.

Now of all the possible reasons President Assad had to release Lt. Goodman, the only one impossible to entertain is the moral one. It was Mr. Assad's calculation that by giving a gift to the self-proclaimed leader of the opposition to American Middle East policy, he would strengthen that opposition and thus advance his interests in the long run—and Syria is known for its own patience in the pursuit of its aims. By conferring instant prestige on the only visibly pro-Syrian American politician on the scene, he acquired an important asset. After all, pro-Syrian American politicians are hard to come by these days, particularly considering Syria's role in the terrorist murder of 241 U.S. Marines.

Reverend Jackson was quick to repay his patron. On the morning news shows right after the release of Lt. Goodman (it's hard to remember which one, since he appeared on all three in consecutive half-hour segments), he found no difficulty in shifting from the moral plane back down to the political one. Moral acts, he was now prepared to concede, are not without their political implications. These implications he was quick to draw by way of an attack on agreement for strategic cooperation with Israel and on the Marine presence in Lebanon—everything short of an endorsement of Syria's right to control Lebanon and dispose of a country that we have pledged ourselves at least to try to preserve.

The reason private diplomacy is prohibited by the Logan Act, and the reason it is wrong in principle, is that private diplomatic aims are necessarily so narrow that they do not coincide with, and indeed distort and jeopardize, the larger aims of the nation. Lt. Goodman was a captive, but he was in no immediate danger. Not so the 1,800 Marines in Beirut fighting against, and sometimes dying at the hands of, Syrian-backed troops. One can disagree with our national aims in Lebanon (preserving its government and thus thwarting Syria's designs on it), and at the same time grant that while any amount of criticism is legitimate, handing a diplomatic coup to Mr. Assad is not.

Though Lt. Goodman's ordeal is now over, not so the American people's ordeal with Reverend Jackson. Seldom since the pilgrimages of Western capitalists to Hitler and of Western intellectuals to Stalin has there been so unbecoming a display of cravenness to cruelty. Will no one in our political system—whether the President or one of the other Democratic candidates—say just how odious is the embrace by this supposed civil rights leader of the coarse butcher of Damascus, fresh with the blood of many Americans and the blood of so many more of his own people?

The Syrians decided—in their own interest, as Lt. Goodman tells us—to abide by the Geneva Convention which, among other things, prohibits parading a prisoner in public. Too bad we don't have a Geneva Convention for Presidential candidates.

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NOTEBOOK

□ THE PRIMARY moral and morphological problem posed by the American invasion of Grenada was its resemblance to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. That analogy has now been definitively disposed of, and by none other than Bernard Coard. Mr. Coard is the Leninist who, judging Maurice Bishop to be too lax a Leninist, had Mr. Bishop shot. From his jail cell in St. George's, Mr. Coard has announced—and this was the announcement that did in the analogy—that he is thinking of suing the United States. For kidnapping and libel, he seems to expect a large sum in damages. Mr. Coard's resort to the American courts is a really stunning admission that there is moral and legal order in the American orbit. Who will sue the Soviets for crossing the Afghan border? Naturally Mr. Coard has retained Ramsey Clark. Mr. Bishop's family, which has a case against Mr. Coard that is more serious than libel, is not yet represented by counsel.

□ TWENTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "Mr. Johnson is a generous, warm-hearted man; his declaration of war on poverty has unmistakable echoes of Roosevelt; yet he seems to feel that he must pay full lip-service to frugality. He defensively insisted that salvaging unemployed young Americans was an act of prudent investment promising a dividend in dollars. He could have gloried in it as putting social values above dividends. President Roosevelt not only would have: he did. All this being said, Mr. Johnson's message contains great promises for America, and for the world. The program he outlines for the country is a large-visioned New Deal for the Sixties. And the end of the arms race, perhaps of the Cold War itself, really could begin with the new American proposals that he said will be unveiled at Geneva on January 21. A big man has made a big start with the world's biggest job." ("Johnson's Miracle," The Editors, January 18, 1964.)

□ 'THE NEW YORKER' has published a fascinating essay, soon to appear as a book, about the hierarchy of the Freudian church. It is Janet Malcolm's deliciously detailed account of the Masson affair, the story of the heretic who concluded that Freud had lied about the seduction theory, that the early erotic experiences that twisted the psyches that provoked Freud to psychoanalysis were not imagined but real. This conclusion (and more, say his enemies) brought down upon Jeffrey Masson's head the full personal and institutional wrath of the psychoanalytic establishment. Among the angry, Malcolm reports, is Muriel Gardiner, "who recently wrote a movingly artless and deadpan memoir of her hair-raising activities in the Austrian underground before the outbreak of the Second World War, and who has been the center of a curious and somewhat pointless controversy over whether she was or wasn't the real-life source for Lillian Hellman's *Julia* (Lillian Hellman says she wasn't). . . ." Now, this must not be allowed to pass. It is not only lacking in respect for a true heroine; it is lacking in respect for history. What exactly does Muriel Gardiner have to do to prove that she is telling the truth? Lillian Hellman says lots of things, some of them demonstrably false. What notion of fairness requires that her opinions be always adduced? And on what grounds does a writer who spends months and months working on thousands and thousands of words about an obscure point of psychoanalytic interpretation (even psychoanalysts will agree on that) call "curious" and "somewhat pointless" a controversy about one of the most stirring cases of modern courage and one of the most popular stories in recent American culture? We cry foul.

□ THIS WEEK'S ADDITION to our masthead is Steve Wasserman, the new editor of New Republic Books, published in association with Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Mr. Wasserman brings considerable literary and editorial skills to his job. For five years an editor of the "Opinion" section of the *The Los Angeles Times*, he has himself written on matters of culture and politics in many publications, and is a consulting editor of *The Threepenny Review*.

The 'Union Leader' without its leader.

LOEB'S GHOST

IF THE 1984 Presidential primary campaign in New Hampshire seems more lackluster than those of years past, it's not surprising. The campaign is the first in the state's history to be conducted without the running commentary of William Loeb, the flamboyant publisher of the *Manchester Union Leader* from 1946 until his death in 1981. The *Union Leader* is New Hampshire's only daily with a statewide circulation, and it is read by roughly 40 percent of the state's adult population. During his thirty-five years as owner, Loeb wreaked more havoc, caused more acrimony, and achieved greater notoriety than the publisher of any other paper in the Northeast, and perhaps the entire country. Not that the *Union Leader* was a good newspaper—far from it. But New Hampshire's leadoff position in the nation's primary system and Loeb's bellicose editorials allowed him to cast a disproportionately long shadow every four years. Whether the *Union Leader* will be able to influence the opening stages of the 1984 Presidential campaign, without Loeb around to name-call and arm-twist, is a question of more than passing interest to those who seek the Presidency.

It would be a mistake to dismiss Loeb as merely a contentious eccentric. He was a vicious bigot who relished sophomoric taunts. In the pages of the *Union Leader* he

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called Gerald Ford "Jerry the Jerk." Ford's Vice President was dubbed "Rocky the Wifeswapper"; his Secretary of State was "Kissinger the Kike"; Barbara Walters was a "hussy." Democrats remember Loeb as the man who made Edmund Muskie cry in the 1972 Presidential primary by reprinting an article that disparaged the candidate's wife. In retrospect, the issue of whether Muskie ever really broke into tears is unimportant. So is the question of whether the paper was in cahoots with Nixon's "dirty tricksters" when it printed a letter that said Muskie called Canadians "Canucks." In the end, the effect was the same. Muskie appeared before the paper's offices with the intention of denouncing the publisher. By the time he left, his campaign had been shattered.

Loeb was a braggart as well, incessantly publishing stories about himself—on his grades at Harvard Law School, on his baptismal certificate (to prove he wasn't Jewish, according to one biographer), and on his fishing and hunting trips. And unlike Presidential candidates, who only had to fear Loeb's pen during the primary season, local inhabitants were in constant peril. Failing to vote or being arrested for drunken driving often elicited front-page lists naming the guilty.

When Loeb died two years ago, the torch was passed to his wife, Nackey Scripps Loeb. Although she is the granddaughter of the founder of the Scripps-Howard chain, Mrs. Loeb was inexperienced in the day-to-day workings of the newspaper world, and many who knew the paper predicted that without Loeb's signed, front-page invective, the paper could not hope to retain its influence. They may well be right: there are signs that the *Union Leader* empire is beginning to decline.

FROM THE day he bought the *Union Leader* in 1946, Loeb appealed to the working-class populism of Manchester's ethnic Democrats by preaching what he called "Teddy Roosevelt conservatism." (Loeb was the son of Roosevelt's personal secretary, and the godson of TR.) But whatever the *Union Leader*'s idea of a "big stick," William Loeb never believed in speaking softly. During his reign he called President Kennedy "The Number One Liar in the United States." Maine's Senator Margaret Chase Smith became "Moscow Maggie," and the Senate Select Watergate Committee, "the Watergate Gestapo."

Loeb inspired contradictory feelings. According to Joe McQuaid, who became editor of the paper in November 1982, "Loeb was a very soft-spoken, genteel, old-fashioned guy who always wore a suit coat and a little bow tie." Benjamin Bradlee, the editor of *The Washington Post*, who was a young reporter on a New Hampshire weekly that Loeb bought in 1948, says, "He was a prick. It was only later that he took on the image of the pistol-packing curmudgeon. Don't be misled by that. . . . He had a bad influence on journalism and on that state."

High among his causes was Loeb's staunch support of Senator Joseph McCarthy, and as late as 1977 he wrote, "Joe was absolutely on the right track. There were then—and there are now—many hidden Communists inside the U.S. Government and the communications industry. . . . Have you ever reflected on some of the vicious attacks on this newspaper and this publisher? You now know where some of it is coming from." Six days later, Loeb warned his readers not to watch the television program "Roots," because, he said, "The Russians are preparing the American mind to accept the Russian Black conquest of South Africa."

LOEB'S POWER had reached its peak earlier in the 1970s, when he was finally able to play kingmaker instead of mere spoiler. With the election of Meldrim Thomson Jr. as governor in 1976, Loeb finally had a personal friend and ally in the statehouse whose militant conservatism matched his own. (Thomson once suggested that the state's National Guard be equipped with nuclear weapons.) In his biography, *Who the Hell is William Loeb?*, Kevin Cash described the relationship between the two men and the *Union Leader*: "Whatever Governor Thomson said or did, he was lauded for it the next day in the *Union Leader*, not unusually in a Page One editorial signed by the publisher. If the occasion so demanded, Governor Thomson was provided eight columns of news space above the Page One masthead to say it himself." That tradition continues today. Thomson, who was defeated in 1978 and crushed in his comeback attempt two years later, writes a weekly column for the paper.

Although Loeb appealed to his audience's visceral fears and prejudices, his greatest political successes were achieved by addressing its ingrained distrust of high taxes and big government. (New Hampshire is the only state without a sales or income tax, and it has one of the lowest social service spending levels in the nation.) But the paper is no rubber stamp for the Republican Party. Far right they may be, but Loeb and his editorial heirs detest Wall Street as much as they do Teddy Kennedy.

A stipulation in Loeb's will also reveals the populist strain in the paper's conservatism. It dictates that a nine-member board—chaired by his wife—direct the paper's operations after his death, and that the last living trustee turn the paper over to the employees. Loeb apparently believed that this would ensure short-term continuation of the paper's editorial policies and provide for the eventual assumption of populist control. Perhaps Loeb's plan will work, and the paper will be able to retain its distinctive flavor after a generation of committee direction and the advent of employee ownership. But even if Mrs. Loeb succeeds in upholding her husband's independence from the establishment, that is no guarantee that she will maintain the same level of influence.

Mrs. Loeb bristles at the suggestion that she will not be able to fulfill her husband's wishes. Not surprisingly, editorial page editor Jim Finnegan, who has been with the *Union Leader* since 1959, agrees with his new publisher. "I don't think the paper has mellowed. And I'd hate to think that we're losing our enemies—we have a very select group for all the right reasons," he says. Conceding that Mrs. Loeb has a less abrasive editorial style than her hus-

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band, and that the paper does not present her commentary in the extra-bold and extra-large type that was a trademark of her husband's work, Finnegan says that her tact is appropriate: "People don't want women to be strident."

In a recent editorial on the question of a Martin Luther King national holiday, Mrs. Loeb refrained from opposing the idea outright, proposing instead the commemoration of Abraham Lincoln: "Not only would the nation finally be granting the honor he so richly deserves, but it would do so in a unifying way that couldn't possibly offend any reasonable person." One can hardly imagine Loeb himself voicing such conciliatory sentiments.

BUT OUTSIDE the paper's coterie, people doubt that Mrs. Loeb can retain the paper's power. David Moore, a pollster and associate professor of political science at the University of New Hampshire, has studied and polled state political views for the past decade and has traced the influence of the *Union Leader* for the past six years. He says that Loeb's vitriol was the ultimate source of the paper's appeal: "The new management does not have the same willingness to be uncivil, and that will eventually reduce its influence." As Moore points out, the paper's success depended on fear, the fear evoked by what Teddy White called the *Union Leader*'s "knife and kill journalism." He sees the demise of the paper's power occurring gradually, as state legislators and officeholders, most of whom still receive free editions of the paper every day, realize that it is unable to stir grass-roots emotions to the fevered pitch it once did.

And at the paper itself, there are reports of furtive sniping among staff members. Tom Gerber, who recently retired as editor in chief of the neighboring *Concord Monitor*, talks of *Union Leader* employees "walking down the hall sideways to avoid the backstabbings." Cash agrees with that characterization: "The word is that there is an internal power struggle. And none of those people knows how to run a newspaper. I don't know a soul on the *Union Leader* that had ever worked in a managerial capacity for another paper."

The staff's lack of outside experience is largely intentional. "The problem with most newspapers in this country," Finnegan argues, "is not that they're praised or criticized, it's that they're not read. They have all the spice of a boiled watermelon." McQuaid objects to "the pipsqueak press" on more conspiratorial, some would say paranoid, grounds: "Somebody sits up there in the big black tower somewhere and decides what they're going to go after," he says.

The thinking around the paper's editorial offices is not usually so sinister, but it is always staunchly nonconformist. The paper's current favorite among the Democrats is former Governor of Florida Reubin Askew, although McQuaid could only muster lukewarm praise for Askew, calling him "the least offensive of the Democratic six pack." When asked about Jesse Jackson's candidacy, McQuaid recently replied, "Maybe we'll endorse him, since he's the only contender who is not trying to cover up where he is coming from." Of course, if Jackson were marshaling widespread support among Democrats, you can bet that the *Union Leader* would be sharpening its editorial scalpel. As it stands, their commentary doesn't cut as deeply as it used to: Walter Mondale isn't going to burst into tears because the paper has dubbed him "Jimmy Junior." Nor is John Glenn likely to suffer much from having his charisma compared to a turnip.

But as long as the first primary is held in an essentially one-newspaper state, the *Union Leader* will be perceived as wielding undue influence over that state's voters. (No candidate since 1952 has won the Presidency without capturing the New Hampshire primary.) And a talk with any of the Democratic Presidential candidates' political operatives confirms that no one seeking political gain in New Hampshire thinks he can yet afford to ignore the *Union Leader*. "We would definitely like to avoid having them pick on us," says one press aide. "They can still destroy people."

DIRK OLIN

Dirk Olin, a former TNR reporter-researcher, is a staff writer at the Washington bureau of the *St. Petersburg Times*.

The case for affirmative action.

CASTE STRUGGLE

ORIGINALLY "affirmative action" meant something morally uncontroversial. The term first became widely used with the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, when strong measures were taken by the federal government and private institutions to protect minorities and women from discrimination. In housing, in employment, in education, explicit attention to racial and other categories was recognized as essential to break the old patterns and enforce desegregation and equal opportunity. Today school districts are scrutinized for racial composition; there is active recruitment of minority labor for public construction; academic jobs must be publicly advertised; tests for police and fire fighters no longer contain physical or educational requirements that aren't related to the job. Such measures are examples of what I'll call "weak affirmative action," which by now has become generally accepted in American society.

"Strong affirmative action," on the other hand, has produced sharp moral divisions. By this I mean the policy of straightforward preference for members of designated groups for positions from which they were formerly excluded. Strong affirmative action goes beyond equality of opportunity, to include the sort of preferential admissions

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that were challenged in the *Bakke* case, and the preferential job advancement that was at issue in the *Weber* case. Because important values weigh on both sides, the arguments show no sign of letting up.

My own view is that although strong affirmative action is intrinsically undesirable, it is at present, and specifically with respect to blacks, a legitimate method of pursuing a goal so important to the national welfare that it can be justified as a temporary policy for both public and private institutions. It is like other, less controversial, measures that impose burdens on some for the public good. Because strong affirmative action has been much attacked lately, the case for it ought to be restated as clearly as possible.

There are three objections to strong affirmative action: that it is inefficient, that it is unfair, and that it damages self-esteem.

The degree of inefficiency depends on how strong a role racial or sexual preference plays in the process of selection. It is possible that preferential treatment will not hurt efficiency. A police force may be more effective if it is racially mixed. But by and large, strong affirmative action must reckon with the costs of lower levels of performance: by doctors, policemen, teachers, electricians—whoever has been selected over better candidates. The differences may be acceptable, but it does no good to deny that they exist. A defense of the policy must take such costs into account in determining what degree of preference is warranted.

THE CHARGE of unfairness arouses the deepest disagreements. To pass over someone because of the group he was born into, where this has nothing to do with his personal qualifications, is to depart from an ideal of individual treatment that our society took a long time to recognize. It also offends the principle of merit—that the best candidate deserves the position.

But none of this means that strong affirmative action is morally repugnant in the manner of racial or sexual discrimination. It is nothing like those practices, for although it too employs race and sex as criteria of selection, it does so for entirely different reasons. Racial and sexual discrimination are based on contempt or even loathing for the excluded group, a feeling that unrestricted contact with them is degrading, and that they are fit only for subordinate positions or menial work. Strong affirmative action is a means of increasing the social and economic strength of formerly victimized groups, and does not stigmatize others. It penalizes those others, certainly, but someone who would gain a position purely on merit doesn't suffer a grave moral injustice if he or she is passed over for strong reasons that can be publicly defended. Merit based on qualification does not necessarily create an overriding claim to the position, and the monetary and social rewards that go with it.

There is a form of individual unfairness here, but it is more like the unfairness of conscription in wartime or of property condemnation under the right of eminent domain, than like racial bias. Burdens are imposed on people who have done nothing to deserve them. The justifiability of such a policy depends on why the burdens are being imposed. Race and sex are bad reasons, but they are not the reasons in this case. The unfairness of strong affirmative action, though real, is not severe enough to exclude it as an instrument of policy, provided the result it achieves is sufficiently important.

The third objection concerns self-esteem. Strong affirmative action makes it hard for a black or a woman who gets a desirable job or is admitted to a selective university to be sure that he or she hasn't benefited from the policy. It comes to be widely felt that success does not mean the same thing for women and minorities. This damage to self-esteem cannot be avoided. Though it doesn't compare to the damage to esteem from unaddressed discrimination, it is a serious cost which should make any defender of strong affirmative action want the practice to end as soon as it has achieved its basic purpose.

Taken together these three objections imply that strong affirmative action should be undertaken only if it will substantially further a social goal of the first importance. Certainly the removal of society's most deep-seated, stubborn, and radically unhealthy divisions is a condition of basic justice and social cohesion, and qualifies as a goal of commanding urgency.

The situation of black people is unique in this respect. For almost a century after the abolition of slavery the United States had a rigid racial caste system of the ugliest kind, which only began to break up twenty-five years ago. Whites were thought to be defiled by social or residential proximity to blacks; intermarriage was taboo; blacks were denied the same level of education and legal protection as whites, were restricted to the most menial occupations, and were barred from positions of authority over whites. The visceral feelings of black inferiority that this system expressed were deeply ingrained in the members of both races. Not surprisingly, they continue to have their effect.

When America finally got around to moving against the caste system, it might have done no more than enforce simple equality of opportunity, perhaps with the help of weak affirmative action, and then wait a few hundred years while things gradually got better. Fortunately, it has decided instead to accelerate the process by both public and private institutional action, because blacks still form a community characterized by widespread poverty, unemployment, and social alienation, and because there is broad recognition of the intractable character of the problem posed by this insular minority and its place in the nation's history and consciousness. The results are already impressive, especially in speeding the advancement of blacks into the middle class. Affirmative action has not done much to improve the position of the poorest blacks. That is the most serious part of America's racial problem and requires a more direct economic attack. But increased access to higher education and upper-level jobs is essential to break the structure of separation that was left largely undisturbed by the legal abolition of the caste system.

Changes of this kind take more than a generation.

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Strong affirmative action for blacks will probably continue to be justified into the early decades of the next century. By then it will have accomplished what it can, and will no longer be worth the costs. One point deserves special emphasis. The goal to be pursued is the reduction of a great social injustice, not proportional representation of the races in all institutions and professions. Success will depend on the overall position of blacks in American society, and the end of their collective social and economic depression. Proportional racial representation is of no value in itself. It is not a legitimate social goal, and should certainly not be the aim of strong affirmative action.

This implies that the justification for strong affirmative action is much weaker for other ethnic groups and for women. The practice will be defensible in a narrower range of circumstances and for a shorter span of time than it is for blacks. No other group has been treated as they have. Hispanics occupy an intermediate position, but it is absurd to include persons of Oriental descent as beneficiaries of affirmative action, strong or weak. They are not a severely deprived and excluded minority. Their eligibility serves only to inflate the numbers covered by affirmative action programs.

With respect to women, I believe that, except as a first step in the transformation of an exclusively male institution with a slow turnover, strong affirmative action is not warranted and weak affirmative action will be enough, if vigilantly applied. (It's not enough, as a federal judge in New York recently pointed out, to issue instructions that women probationary fire fighters be treated "exactly like men"; true equality of treatment requires that the different backgrounds and experiences of women be taken into account in their training.) The long history of discrimination against women, though very damaging, has not produced that deep pattern of collective social, economic, and educational handicaps that make it so difficult for blacks to advance in open competition. Women do not form a separate hereditary community, characteristically poor and uneducated, and their position is not likely to be self-perpetuating in the same way as that of an outcast race. Their social and economic situation can be expected to improve quite rapidly under conditions of full equality of opportunity.

What about quotas? There is a tendency by parties on both sides of this issue to blur the distinction between weak and strong affirmative action. Defenders of quotas tend to minimize the degree of preference involved and opponents tend to exaggerate it. But a quota may be a method of either weak or strong affirmative action, depending on the circumstances. If discrimination or inadequate recruitment alone is preventing blacks from obtaining, say, jobs as construction workers or bus drivers, then a quota to counteract this doesn't give preference to the less qualified, and would constitute weak affirmative action. Rough equivalence across groups can be presumed in hiring for unskilled jobs, but it becomes less likely, and harder to establish, the greater the skill and education required for the position.

Differences in average qualifications among groups should not surprise us. Nor should they be explained away by a lot of humbug about the discriminatory nature of standardized tests. If a quota proportional to population or even to representation in the applicant pool is enforced against the background of differences in qualifications, it is explicitly preferential, and amounts to strong affirmative action. Because quotas prevent the costs in efficiency from being weighed against the value of minority hiring, they are an unnecessarily crude form of strong affirmative action—too crude for cases where it is vital to strike this balance correctly, as in the hiring of schoolteachers. Quotas may be easy to administer, but they overlook the fact that group preference is only one factor among others in the process of decision. They also create the impression that the goal of the policy is proportional representation.

Quotas would be better reserved for the purpose of weak affirmative action—where underrepresentation shows that equal opportunity is being denied. That means, in effect, unskilled and semiskilled jobs, and more highly skilled positions that include their own training programs.

It is important for the defenders of strong affirmative action to be clear about their aims. The need for exceptional measures to remove the stubborn residues of racial caste clearly outweighs the arguments against strong affirmative action. But the case for the policy is incomplete unless we acknowledge that it has costs, that those costs are not equally shared, and that they are acceptable only to remedy a social situation that should be intolerable to us all.

THOMAS NAGEL

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Liquor labeling on the rocks.

TROUBLE BREWING

WHAT'S THE BEST thing about Miller Lite? Is it the great taste, or the fact that it has a third fewer calories than Miller's regular beer? Or is it, perhaps, propylene glycol alginate—the foam enhancing additive that gives Lite its milky white head? And Lite isn't the only potent potable that contains unsavory-sounding additives. In every bottle of Gallo Chablis Blanc, to name just one example, there's a little dash of sulfur dioxide. Other winemakers prefer different preservatives—potassium sorbate, or sorbic acid—and many add tartaric acid (a "fla-

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vor enhancer") to their concoctions. Now, most Americans are used to the idea of artificially preserved, flavored, and enhanced foods and drinks. But chemically treated beer and wine? This is sobering news. And there's a reason why you probably haven't heard it before. Unlike the makers of every other food, drug, and cosmetic—from Alpo to Apple Jacks—alcoholic beverage companies aren't required by law to list on their products' labels the ingredients they use.

THE EXEMPTION of alcohol from federal ingredient disclosure rules is a legal tradition of sorts (its roots lie in the legislation that repealed Prohibition), but it's a tradition that has come under increasing attack in recent years. Critics of the alcohol industry are saying that consumers have as much of a right to know what's in their drinks as what's in their dog's dinner, and that the alcohol industry, which rang up sales of $59 billion in 1982, can afford to tell them.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest, a consumer group which specializes in public health issues, has been making these arguments since 1972, when it first petitioned the Nixon Administration to require alcoholic beverage ingredient labeling. This demand led to heavy lobbying efforts by the alcoholic beverage industry, and to some bureaucratic squabbling between the Food and Drug Administration (which wanted ingredient labeling) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (which opposed labeling). Finally, in 1980, the Carter Administration issued a rule requiring alcoholic beverage bottles to carry either a list of ingredients or an address to which consumers could write for ingredient information. (Some beer companies now support ingredient labeling; the main opposition to the idea comes from wine and distilled spirits makers.)

But Ronald Reagan took office before the Carter ingredient labeling rule was scheduled to go into effect, and it became one of the earliest targets of his efforts to roll back federal regulation. In May 1981, freshly appointed B.A.T.F. officials, citing a Reagan executive order that called on agencies to discard regulations whose costs to society outweigh their benefits, announced their intention to rescind the Carter rule. The rescission took effect seven months later. B.A.T.F.'s cost-benefit argument corresponded to industry claims that ingredient labeling would cost millions of dollars. But it contradicted an independent cost-benefit analysis commissioned by Carter's B.A.T.F. in 1979 that showed that industry estimates of ingredient labeling's costs were exaggerated. (The distilled spirits industry, for example, claimed that a labeling rule would add nine cents to the price of a bottle of liquor; the study said that the real figure would be more like a penny.) The Reagan regulators apparently decided it was unnecessary to commission their own independent cost-benefit study; a spokesperson for Reagan's B.A.T.F. says that the agency's decision relied on "updated" cost estimates from the industry.

After the rescission, the labeling battle moved into the federal courts, where C.S.P.I., questioning B.A.T.F.'s cost-benefit calculations, sued for reinstatement of the rule. In his decision early last year, Federal District Judge John Pratt called the rescission "a good example of arbitrary and capricious decision-making," and ordered the rule reinstated. But B.A.T.F. and the beverage makers fought back. B.A.T.F. appealed Pratt's ruling; wine and distilled spirits industry lawyers helped the agency win a court order blocking it pending settlement of the appeal. Last October B.A.T.F. issued a new rescission. And Congress recently passed a measure sponsored by Representative Edward Roybal, Democrat of California, which bans federal funds for ingredient labeling until the courts make a final judgment on the controversy. That could take as long as two years.

JUST HOW BIG a public health hazard is posed by unlabeled alcohol? C.S.P.I.'s spirited warnings about unidentified ingredients are part reasoned caution, part partisan exaggeration. All alcoholic beverage ingredients have to be approved by F.D.A.; the great majority—even Lite's propylene glycol alginate—are safe for almost everybody. Only alcohol itself is a proven threat. Yet certain additives in beer and wine may be harmful to some people. According to a recent study by Dr. Ronald A. Simon of California's Scripps Clinic, sulfite preservatives (a category which includes sulfur dioxide, as well as potassium metabisulfite, another common beer and wine additive) can cause asthmatics to have reactions ranging from wheezing to coma, and about five hundred thousand highly susceptible individuals need to avoid them. And according to Dr. Dorothy Sogn, an allergy expert at the National Institutes of Health, many people are sensitive to natural ingredients like yeast, grapes, and corn, which retain their allergenic properties even after being fermented into beer and wine. Without ingredient labels, consumers have no way of knowing if they're drinking such potentially harmful substances.

President Reagan's desire to subject federal rules to tough economic scrutiny is neither novel nor inherently unsound. But the ingredient labeling dispute raises legitimate questions about the wisdom of using cost-benefit analysis to judge health and safety regulations. The costs of regulation tend to be both relatively easy to measure and concentrated in a single area or industry; the benefits, on the other hand, are often intangible and diffuse. Thus the exercise of weighing dollars against human health can be difficult and imprecise; it's often a matter of balancing the interests of competing groups. Is it in fact worth raising the cost of wine production to ease the lives of a half a million asthmatics? This should be an easy question for wine companies and asthmatics to answer. It should have been tougher for the Administration. That is why the defeat of the ingredient labeling rule, though a relatively minor setback for consumer protection, is hard to swallow.

CHUCK LANE

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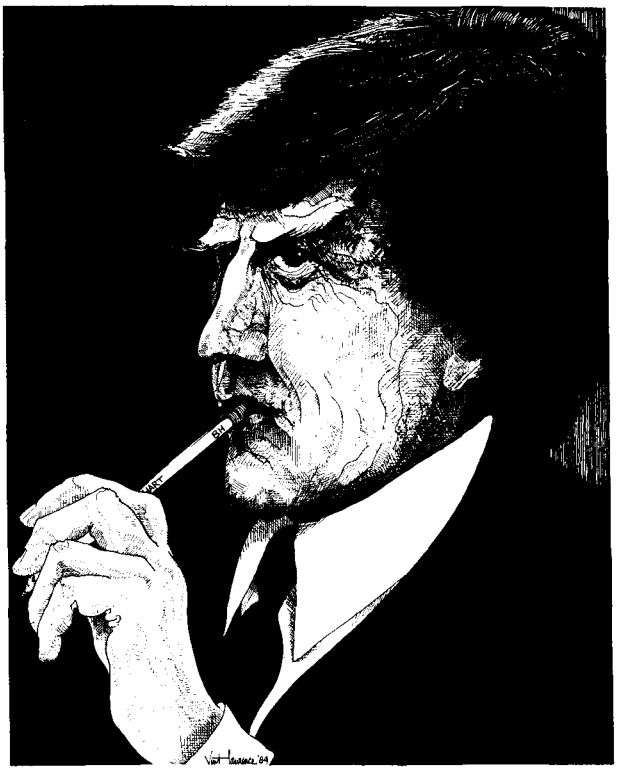
The unfulfilled promise of generational politics.

HART'S BIG CHILL

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

"Mondale is mush," said Gary Hart in a recent conversation. "He's weak, and his managers know it, and they're scared. Mondale's argument is inevitability, but Muskie was more inevitable than Mondale." Hart's analysis may yet be proved correct; but if it is, why should he be the beneficiary? The Hart campaign has so far disappointed the hopes many liberals held out for it. The handsome, youthful Senator from Colorado was going to be the candidate of excitement. With the best young public policy thinkers in America at his side, he would stride out of the West to lead the Democratic Party into the future. John F. Kennedy, Hart's model, had taken the generation first mobilized by Adlai E. Stevenson and brought it to power by giving it a harder edge. Gary Hart was going to do the same for the generation awakened by J.F.K., the generation that created the candidacies of Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern. The cohort that fought in and fought against the war in Vietnam, now grown to maturity, would fulfill its promise at last, and Gary Hart would stand at its head.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

By now, according to the scenario, Hart would be marching toward victory with the aroused generation in massed formation behind him. There is no sign of that yet; so far his campaign has been a lonely crowd. Like Jerry Brown before him, Hart is in danger of being seen as one more in a series of false messiahs of the new generation. Hart has seemed unable—or perhaps unwilling—to connect with the dormant feelings of his potential supporters. Over and over, in Washington, one hears the same plays on the candidate's name. All Hart but no heart. Too much Hart, not enough soul. Hart broken. As 1984 began, the political community tended to dismiss the Hart campaign as a thing cold and inert.

Yet Hart himself is curiously insistent that his campaign is very much alive. It doesn't worry him, he says, that in the Gallup poll he is under 5 percent. He knows that in 1972 and 1976, at similar points in their campaigns, George McGovern and Jimmy Carter had similarly negligible ratings. "The public polls are meaningless in nomination politics," he says. "They mainly measure name recognition." So he doesn't mind that most voters may never have heard of him; he is more interested that a mid-December *Boston Globe* poll of New Hampshire voters puts him in third place there, with Glenn, who runs second, fading. And Hart is encouraged by his private polls, which tell him that 84 percent of prospective Democratic primary voters declare that they would vote for a candidate who would "bring new ideas and fresh approaches" to governing. His polls tell him that only 18 percent think Walter Mondale "has new ways of solving problems," and that 67 percent would vote for a candidate who "would bring a new generation of leaders" to power. And his polls tell him that when this statement is read to Democratic voters—"What we really need is a President who can inspire the people and present new directions for America. I'm not sure either Glenn or Mondale fits that description"—51 percent of them say they agree. Hart's private polls do indeed show that there is still an opportunity for him or someone like him. They say nothing about whether he is capable of seizing that opportunity.

The opportunity lies in the fact that among the candidates only Gary Hart is potentially a generational politician. In 1984 Hart alone is positioned to become the leader of the generation born during the 1940s and 1950s—the generation that shaped and was shaped by the hopes, conflicts, and disillusionments of the 1960s and 1970s and

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that, because of its vast numbers, will eventually command politics well into the twenty-first century. Generational politics in America isn't new. Throughout the twentieth century each burst of liberal reform has had a strong generational impulse behind it. Theodore Roosevelt, at 42 the youngest President in American history, opened the new century. F.D.R., who said, "This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny," brought a phalanx of young reformers to Washington. John F. Kennedy, elected at 43, campaigned in 1960 on an explicit generational theme, and announced in his inaugural that "the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans." Hart, who is 46, seems convinced he can make a similar appeal. "I can win," he says quietly. "It can be done." Perhaps, but clearly Hart has not done it yet. Why?

The answer may lie in the contradictions of his character, which is of a sort that is unusual in his profession. Unlike the kind of politician who seeks love and acceptance from crowds and eagerly divulges his private stories to strangers, Hart is self-conscious and self-contained. He has an almost mystical belief in his personal destiny, yet exalts rationalism in politics. He is a self-proclaimed generational chieftain who is a full decade removed from those who would be his followers. He offers the potential of making liberalism once again the country's dominant doctrine, but categorically refuses to make any emotional appeal. He believes passionately, without allowing himself to show passion. One of the traits that has been crucial in making him a United States Senator—his immense self-control—may incapacitate his Presidential campaign.

In talking casually with people about Hart, I've found a widespread assumption that he is the product of a privileged childhood—the son of some prosperous Episcopalian minister, perhaps, or even a scion of some Western ranching dynasty. The reality is different, and more intriguing; but few people know it because Hart talks about himself only with the greatest reluctance. He is Gatsbyesque in the way his smooth, self-created persona blurs his origins. There's something impenetrable about him that both attracts and perplexes his aides. One of them told me that on his first day on the job, he discovered that nobody on the staff was completely sure about the Senator's precise background, or even about his real name.

GARY HART grew up in Ottawa, Kansas. His father was a railroad worker who, he says, never earned more than $100 a week. Both of his parents came from large, poor families. Neither graduated from high school. Both were evangelical Protestants, and Gary was "raised in the Church of the Nazarene, faithfully." During the summers he worked on railroad gangs, where most of his fellow laborers were black and Hispanic. He went to Bethany Nazarene College, an unaccredited school in Oklahoma. There he had the good luck to study under Prescott Johnson, the school's one-man philosophy department, who recruited a few select incoming students each year. "That shaped me as much as anything else," Hart says. "It was a whole new intellectual world." Under Johnson's tutelage he studied the classics, and he aspired to become a philosophy professor like his mentor. He grew ambitious enough to apply to the Yale Divinity School. When he left for New Haven, it was his first time East.

The working-class provincial approached the Ivy League with a sense of "adventure and a little awe, apprehensive about people talking differently than I did." He felt, he says, "woefully inadequate." In his second year he decided he didn't want to become a professor after all, yet he put in the three years necessary to receive his divinity degree. He regarded it as an opportunity to get a "really good college education." He took courses in three departments—religion, philosophy, and literature. "I put together one hundred great books for myself. A lot I did on my own. I read the Russians, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky and the others. I read Hugo, all of Faulkner, Hemingway, Melville, Hawthorne, the Greeks."

In 1960, Hart, then 23, received his political baptism as a student volunteer for John F. Kennedy. To this day Kennedy, the highborn intellectual politician, remains Hart's ideal. (While some politicians still celebrate their log-cabin origins, many liberals, after F.D.R. and J.F.K., try to make their personal stories fit the aristocratic model.) "John Kennedy activated my generation politically," says Hart. "Most people my age weren't interested in politics, because that's what guys who smoked cigars did; it was unsavory. Anyone in grad school interested in politics was considered an oddball. Kennedy legitimized politics, even before there was a cause. He created the cause. Now public service was an honorable thing."

KENNEDY'S EMERGENCE on the national stage helped resolve Hart's personal crisis. "Here was a bridge to the real world, an idealistic and honorable bridge," he says. He decided that he would attend law school and eventually settle in Denver. "It never crossed my mind to stay in the East," he says. "It would mean abandoning my roots altogether." While he was at Yale Law School, his father changed his name from Hartpence to Hart, which, the Senator claims, was the original family name. The son did likewise, assuming a new, dashing name that was an old name at a time when he was establishing his identity.

By his mid-20s, Hart embodied the tension of three major transformations. He was a Midwesterner who had gone East; a young man of the '50s who embraced the '60s; and a self-made intellectual striving to test his beliefs in the public arena. Going from East to West is the classic American odyssey; but going from West to East is an equally significant, if mostly unheralded, mythic journey. (*The Great Gatsby*, of course, is the definitive book on the theme.) It means to go from anonymity to power, from roughness to sophistication, and, perhaps, from authenticity to artificiality. Hart aimed to be both an Easterner and a Westerner, a man with two advanced degrees from Yale, yet the representative Coloradan.

Hart was in law school during the Kennedy years. The '50s ethos was still very prevalent, according to his cam-

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paign manager and classmate, Oliver Henkel. "It was a sleepwalking existence," says Henkel. "If you put one foot ahead of the next, then you would get ahead. In law school that began to break down. People started to talk about freedom marches and sit-ins." The hipsters of Hart's era had been beatniks, rebels without a cause; one could try to escape, but not to a community. Only individuals were "on the road"; but that was not for Hart. Hart was what David Riesman, in *The Lonely Crowd*, called inner-directed, and his earnest striving was exactly what beats denied. Hart understood hipness in the '60s, but he could never be truly hip in the '60s manner because he had always been too cool, too alone, too rational. He was a committed member of the silent generation coming of age in the 1960s, a generational anomaly.

Hart's severe education also set him apart. He was rigorously schooled in philosophy and law, closed systems of logic which work explicitly from premises to conclusions and are steeped in mistrust of irrationality. But political society, where Hart chose to live, isn't the land of pure reason. The distance between thought and action is always treacherous.

After John Kennedy's assassination, Hart went from law school to Washington to serve as a junior civil rights lawyer in Robert Kennedy's Justice Department. Hart doesn't see Robert Kennedy, as many others do, as an existential hero, defining himself through intense commitment. In Hart's view, J.F.K.'s assassination "created Bobby's commitment. He was a captive of events. He was not his own man; he was his brother's brother. He was called on to respond to commitment. Bobby is almost Greek, a tragic figure, a man thrust into a role." To Hart, R.F.K.'s passion can't be reproduced, even if one wanted to, because he was possessed by circumstances.

When R.F.K. left to run for the Senate, Hart went to the Interior Department where, as Stewart Udall's special assistant, he helped draft some of the early environmental laws. When Richard Nixon was elected President, Hart moved to Denver and set up a private law practice specializing in natural resource issues. In 1970 he wrote a long memo to Senator George McGovern outlining how he should organize his campaign in the Western states. McGovern asked the unknown Denver attorney to be his campaign manager.

GARY HART AND WARREN BEATTY DURING THE 1972 MCGOVERN CAMPAIGN. PHOTO BY STUART BRATESMAN.

Hart wrote a book about the campaign, an inside account of how a relatively obscure Senator came from nowhere in the polls at the beginning of an election year to win his party's nomination. In *Right from the Start*, Hart describes these extraordinary events through the prism of Tolstoy's deterministic theory of history, citing General Kutuzov's injunction in *War and Peace*—"time and patience." The brilliance of the primary campaign, however, was in sharp contrast to the muddle of the general election effort. Here, too, Hart perceives the hidden currents of history. For despite all the egregious political errors, especially the Eagleton affair, Hart believes that his side "lost the election on the issues." He argues that the ideological springs of the Democratic Party had run dry by 1972. Although the campaign brought forward a new generation of organizers, it failed to produce a similar group of young thinkers. "American liberalism was near bankruptcy," he writes. But for Hart the McGovern campaign was a beginning, not an end. If change was to come, then a new generation must assume power. But, Hart observes in his book, power is not passed like a torch from one generation to the next. "While one generation has power, it also has strength, and some fleeting claim to immortality. It relinquishes power only under duress, because the loss of power is a blunt reminder of mortality." And even the will of the young isn't enough to seize power. The historical moment must be right.

After writing *Right from the Start*, Hart decided to run for the Senate. He was 37 years old. His campaign slogan was, "They've had their turn, now it's our turn." It was 1974, the Watergate year, and the reference was obviously to Nixon. But there was a subtext. Hart's standard stump speech was entitled, "The End of the New Deal." In it he pointed out that while the architects of the New Deal were not doctrinaire, "the pragmatism of the New Deal has become doctrine." Hart asserted his belief in the liberal principle that "government is the guarantor of equal opportunity and individual liberty," but he warned that the "marriage of bureaucracy and technocracy," big govern-

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ment and big business, was "leading us to a two-class society—the rich and all the rest of us." His speech was suggestive, not definitive. He admitted he didn't have all the answers. He argued that only by recovering the original experimental method of the New Deal could we be released from imprisoning "old premises." He wasn't retreating from liberalism or his association with McGovern (who, in any case, wasn't a liability in 1974), but elaborating the insights he had gained during the 1972 campaign. He won big.

In the Senate, Hart received a seat on the Armed Services Committee, where he grew frustrated with the narrowness of the debate over defense policy. "Gary intuited that the choices before him weren't sound," says Larry Smith, his former legislative assistant, who is now director of Harvard's Center for Science and International Affairs. "It was fallacious to talk about defense only in quantitative terms. One had to focus on goals and objectives rather than on the percentage of growth in the budget. More is not better. Less is not better. Only better is better. The debate had to be reconceived." Hart's military reform policy had four principal aspects: first, officers should be trained as group leaders, not as bureaucratic managers; second, in the European theater, military doctrine should stress maneuver, not attrition; third, global strategy should emphasize naval forces, a post-Vietnam notion that de-emphasizes land encampments; and fourth, weapons should be designed to work in battle. This is the school of thought popularized by James Fallows in *National Defense*. Hart's advocacy of military reform won him praise as an innovator and criticism as a technocrat more interested in instrumentalities than in goals. Hart says he never intended military reform as an isolated initiative, removed from larger considerations of foreign policy, but rather as a complement to a pro-arms control position.

BY 1980, according to Smith, Hart considered military reform as the "prototype for a series of policy redesigns." Reagan had won the Presidency partly because of his promise of the prosperity that would be wrought by supply-side economics and partly because of the older liberals' ideological exhaustion. Hart set out to reframe the economic debate on the Democratic side, scouring academia in search of young intellectuals. He discovered the prophets of industrial policy—Robert B. Reich, Lester Thurow, and others—long before any other Democrat. Hart's intense interest in the subject was crucial in making it a major public issue. He sees industrial policy—an explicit and coherent government role in economic development—as a way to accelerate growth, meet foreign competition, and minimize the human costs of technological change. He regards the free market of Reagan's imagination as a myth. Instead of passive reliance on the "magic of the marketplace," he would chart the trends of international markets, restructure industries, and retrain workers. Hart feels that the post-industrial revolution we are experiencing is an upheaval every bit as profound as the first industrial revolution. His frequent statements on the potential of high technology have often been interpreted as indifference to declining regions and industries. Lately, he has been saying that he favors a "balanced" policy, one that applies high technology to basic manufacturing. Still, he eschews protectionist measures, such as the automobile "domestic content" bill advanced by labor, believing them to be attempts to preserve the past and avoid the inescapable future.

Hart's recasting of military and industrial strategy began to mesh with his Presidential political strategy in November 1980, after he had won a difficult reelection contest for the Senate. He began with the premise that for the Democratic Party to win and govern well it would have to distinguish itself both from Reaganism and from its own ossified past. The key test of a Presidential candidate must be his vision. If the test were how many endorsements one could garner, Walter Mondale would prevail. But if the test were a new perspective, Mondale would falter.

HART'S STRATEGY suggested two stages. In the first stage, the notion would be advanced that for the party to triumph again it must offer fresh approaches. In this stage, Hart would position himself as the candidate of new ideas. In the second stage, he would integrate the various issues thematically. Mondale, who deals exclusively in particulars (interest groups and specific policies) would be pressured to operate on a higher conceptual level. The idea was to create a nontraditional campaign, forcing Mondale onto terrain where he was unsteady.

Hart sought to advance his strategy at the midterm Democratic conference in Philadelphia. He presided over a panel called "New Ideas for the '80s," with Reich, Fallows, and others, which attracted a large crowd of party delegates. It was the successful culmination of the first stage of his campaign. The second stage was foreshadowed by his speech to the full conference. It was a lackluster performance, and Hart failed to emerge from the pack. His panel had engaged the minds of his audience, but his speech did not engage their hearts.

Because Hart was not the orthodox old liberal, the "neoliberal" tag was applied to him, and after an article appeared in *Esquire* on the subject, he couldn't shake the appellation. In the short run, the label gained Hart a few early supporters. But in the long run it pigeonholed him in a way that restricted his appeal. "We didn't have anything to do with neoliberalism," says Larry Smith. "Somebody came along and put it on Gary's forehead. It was a term he never would have chosen. The term was a political liability, a code word for a point of view insufficiently passionate about the goals and values of the traditional liberal movement. In the contest for ideas, it came too quickly, before Gary could mount his own definition." Hart himself says laconically, "Neoliberalism is irrelevant."

The second stage of the campaign, the thematic phase, was supposed to be launched with the publication of his book, *A New Democracy*, in the spring of 1983. The central theme of the book reiterated what he had said in his Presidential announcement speech: "Far too many candidates

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and too many Presidents have been running against the very government they seek to lead. Government is the instrument by which we solve our collective problems." In a review in THE NEW REPUBLIC Arthur Schlesinger Jr. hailed the book for its "authentic intellectual curiosity"; but as a campaign tactic, the book was a flop. Unlike Hart's first book, it failed to link specifics to larger themes. It was, as Schlesinger also noted in his review, a "laundry list." "The second stage has been much harder than the first" said Press Secretary Kathy Bushkin. "And the book didn't do it."

All through 1983 Hart was unable to repeat the success of his midterm panel, creating his own events, setting the terms other candidates would have to respond to. Instead, Mondale's traditional campaign of endorsements set the pace, attempting to present his victory as an accomplished fact even before a single ballot was cast. By fostering the image of inevitability, Mondale hoped to make it a reality. Hart, in the meantime, had his own difficulties. As always, he found it hard to ask people for help, whether old political friends or potential financial supporters. He appeared aloof, passionless. Above all, he was not offering the poetry of his own experience—the story of the rise of a working-class Midwestern boy who went to Yale, committed himself to civil rights, the environment, and peace, and now embodies the future. He seemed curiously constrained, as though he would lose himself if he let go.

MY FIRST interview with Hart occurred after a long, exhausting day of campaigning in New Hampshire, where he toured a garbage dump, the Wilton General Store, the Milford town square, and the ethnic clubs of Manchester. He ended his campaigning at an American Legion hall, where he spent a half-hour quietly watching a football game, drinking a beer, and talking with the patrons. There was no stir in the room. He didn't call attention to himself. His presence was discreet, but not remote.

Later, at ease at the home of a supporter, he talked freely. "I know I wouldn't get the endorsements of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., NOW, the N.E.A.," he said. "They're like banks. They play it safe. It's the nature of human institutions not to take risks. Most of the factions of the Democratic Party in 1960 didn't support John Kennedy. And I have been doing something very unconventional, laying out greatly detailed policies. By April or May, this campaign will have to get down to policies. There will come a time when memorized answers won't work," he said—a jibe clearly aimed at John Glenn. "I will be so much better prepared that I will win."

Why doesn't he tell his story? "Any time a candidate talks about himself I get turned off," he replied. "It's old-style politics. It's commercializing your personal life. It's so hackneyed and trite. There's a point beyond which you can sacrifice your individuality for ambition. I don't have to sell myself. I have to sell the need to change generations of leadership. I figure if people want to know my story, they'll ask. Why does it have to be personal?" To Hart, egotistical displays are the sin of pride. If his ideas are correct, and the forces of history are in proper motion, he will be President. If they're not, he won't be. "You can't force change on a society that doesn't want change," he remarked. "If the Democratic Party wants security and certainty, it will nominate Mondale. I can't make the Democratic Party do anything." Instead of personal charisma releasing voter enthusiasm, he sees emotions springing from a logical course of events. "Emotion in nomination politics," he says, "is the product of success. The day I win my first primary, this will be the most emotional campaign of all. And I won't be doing anything different. Success liberates emotion."

HART, who declined to become a philosophy professor, still holds to the philosophic ideal of the rule of reason. After our interview, it occurred to me that Hart aspires to be a philosopher-king. In Plato's *Republic* the philosopher-king enthrones reason in the state. He banishes the poet, who in Plato's scheme is a theatrical dramatist. The poet's inspiration doesn't derive from a logic whose steps we can trace. His appeal is to feeling, not to reason. "The dramatic poet," writes Plato, "sets up a vicious form of government in the individual soul: he gratifies that senseless part which cannot distinguish great and small, but regards the same things as now one, now the other; and he is an image-maker whose images are phantoms far removed from reality." By playing on the illusions he has conjured, the dramatic poet corrupts the character of society and overthrows the reign of true principles. When the President himself is an actor, a dramatic artist who governs through appearances, Plato's nightmare seems wonderfully up to date. The great philosopher's utopian *Republic*, however, was no democracy. In a democracy, even putative philosopher-kings must be dramatic artists. If politicians reject the drama, they reject the stage, and that is tantamount to rejecting the audience. And to do that is to deny the true principles of *this* republic.

In my second interview with Hart, I asked him about the quandary of a philosopher-politician in a democracy. "What I'm resisting is what Plato feared, the role of unreason, the cheap emotionalism in politics," he said. "I overreact to it. I think politics ought to involve human emotion. But I'm against the manipulation of emotion for human gain. Maybe if I were better at it I'd feel differently. Also, I don't find talking about myself easy. I'm constantly on guard against the manipulative use of my background. I can't use my upbringing to sway votes for me. I can use it to make a point. I keep looking for ways to reveal myself, but I can't do it unless it comes naturally. If I do it on a calculated basis, I can't do it. Phoniness drives me nuts, and politics is loaded with phonies. I consciously try to avoid what turns people off about politics—hypocrisy and shallow emotionalism. I am not an entertainer."

Hart wants to lead not by appearances but by ideas. His brand of liberalism, though anchored in enduring ideals, is experimental. His willingness to risk advancing unor-

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thodox policies makes him a liberal in the manner of the young New Dealers. In this light, Hart's politics are traditional, for the traditional fundament of Democratic success has always been new ideas.

Hart's liberalism is a distinct departure from Mondale's. Mondale rallies the fractured Democratic coalition by waving the bloody shirt of the New Deal. He seeks to restore the status quo of the immediate past, which is the dictionary definition of conservatism. Reagan, for his part, is the atavistic Smithian liberal. He attempts to restore the free market of the pre-New Deal era without allowing theoretically for the modern corporation, thereby clearing the way for greater concentrations of economic power and undermining his own stated goal. But in a contest between Walter Mondale and Ronald Reagan, Reagan, even as the incumbent, still appears as the candidate of change, the innovator, because Mondale casts himself as the defender of the old regime, and because Mondale's inherent caution highlights Reagan's risk-taking on behalf of ideas.

YET BOTH MEN are custodians of visions of the past. Curiously, both claim the mantle of F.D.R. The original New Deal was a fusion of vision and policy. Reagan, the old New Dealer turned reactionary, understands the visionary element better than any other politician of recent times. He appropriates it for his own ends, frequently invoking F.D.R. Mondale has appropriated the programmatic aspect, harnessing policy to a coalition of interest groups. He asserts that this is the true tradition, and charges that Reagan is the aberration, the "radical." The split of vision and program is at the heart of liberalism's ideological crisis. Can they be reunited by the rediscovery of the experimental method that animated the New Deal? That is Hart's ultimate promise.

If Hart could somehow awaken this excitement and win the nomination, he would be in a position to mount a general election campaign unlike that of any other Democrat in the field. Mondale, the candidate of inevitability, promises a traditional party campaign. Glenn, the candidate of electability, promises a campaign of image. Hart, who is not at all inevitable, may actually be highly electable. Among other things, he would instantly raise the age issue to prominence. While Mondale's stolidity allows Reagan to look youthful, Hart's real youth would highlight Reagan's real age. Then, Hart the Coloradan would challenge Reagan in the West, the redoubt of conservatism. This political challenge would strike at the core of Reagan's image as an authentic Westerner. It might unnerve Reagan to run against a young man who wears cowboy boots and stakes a claim to the future. Most important, Hart's politics of ideas meets Reagan's greatest strength. Against an opponent without vision, Reagan would be free to run against liberal "special interests." But against a candidate of ideas, *Reagan's* special interests might become the issue. Also, because Hart really does have ideas, not merely policies, and because they're central not only to his campaign but to his personality, he might at last be able to make Reagan's cavalier use of facts an issue for the first time. Candidates who deal in particulars concede ideology to Reagan, and no matter how many facts they marshal they can never project as compelling a vision as his. But a candidate who engages Reagan on the high frontier of ideology concedes nothing and may force him on the defensive.

Just as Kennedy focused the scattered energies of his generation, Hart, if he is to succeed, must reassemble the younger generation for a new crusade. He must cast the election as a contest not between a Democrat and a Republican, but between the new generation and the old leaders, a continuum that runs from Mondale through Reagan.

THE POST-WORLD WAR II generation is not a coherent whole. It contains three distinct parts. In order to forge it into his political base, Hart would have to appeal to all of them. He must speak to those his own age, who "gave life to the midlife crisis," as his friend Oliver Henkel puts it. "By the time we reached our late 30s and early 40s, the world we had expected to come into at middle age wasn't there at all." Hart must also speak to those at the center of the generation, those whose sensibilities were shaped in the 1960s. They're now iced in the big chill. Many are frustrated in second-level jobs, squeezed financially as they begin families, wondering if the hope of their college years was simply a naive delusion yet still yearning for commitment and community. Finally, Hart must speak to those currently in college, the new silent generation, whose vivid memories are only of Watergate, inflation, "America Held Hostage," and Reagan; they have yet to learn the virtue of public life.

The present moment strangely echoes the late '50s, when Hart himself was awakened to politics. The young are mute. There's no great cause, and narrow careerism is an overriding obsession. Hart's detachment seems superficially to reflect the temper of the time. But he is beyond the moment in his devotion to an ideal of public life, so clearly at odds with the avarice avidly promoted by Reagan and the power without purpose emanating from some of the other Democratic candidates.

Reason alone, however, doesn't make Presidents. There is, for instance, the mundane matter of money—of which Hart has little. And when there's no money there's no television, without which his message may not reach the voters. Even then, he would have to confront the voters' widespread resignation in the face of what's being presented to them as inevitable. Moreover, to take advantage of his natural assets, Hart must do what he's resisted thus far: he must reveal his passion, demonstrating his politics are not bloodless and abstract. That may be a price he will refuse to pay, because, as he sees it, he has protected his authenticity by holding back. What he wants most may be what he's incapable of having. If he fails, he will have recapitulated the essential experience of the rebels of the 1950s: he will have become an isolated individual unable to make himself heard while older men drone on.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Death and Transfiguration

Meryl Streep, as Karen Silkwood, drove her car through the gate of the plant where she worked, parked, then headed across the lot toward her job; and I felt snug. *Silkwood* was going to be all right. In those first ordinary actions,

Silkwood
(20th Century Fox)

Streep had once again done the miraculous, which is the daily work of fine actors: she had changed the unchangeable. When I last saw her, in *Sophie's Choice*, the core of Sophie had been innate, immutable. Now she has transmuted to another immutable.

Streep does not let us down. But the film does, badly. Mike Nichols, returning to film direction after an eight-year absence, begins well enough. With his good cinematographer, Miroslav Ondricek, Nichols opens by laying in some Oklahoma morning landscape, quiet, expectant. Then, prefiguring the finish, he picks up Streep's car on a lonely road as she drives with lover and friend to the plant where they all work. The stage is almost literally being set.

And in some ways the picture continues to disclose more good Nichols. He has cast the film unexceptionably. His use of space is cunning—such as the way he places Streep and Cher in different rooms, speaking through an open door, when there is a difference between them but they are united by a common roof over their heads. His use of camera motion and editing is more fluent than ever. These are matters that he has learned since he entered films. What seems numbed in *Silkwood* is what Nichols brought with him to films: his theatrical sense of dialogue—its rhythms and timing—which was exquisite. This film labors under longueurs, not of windy dialogue but of wind between the lines that bloats the film. No character can ask another to have a beer without enough time lapsing before the answer in which to drink the whole damned beer. (Incidentally, I'd like to see *one* film about proles in which a man in his undershirt on a hot day drinks beer and doesn't pour part of it over his head.) About 20 of the film's 128 minutes could have been eliminated simply by picking up cues, and the result would not have betrayed the idiomatic pace of the characters' speech. As is, the pace gets so draggy that it reflects on the actors. Audiences may think that Streep and colleagues are less gripping than they ought to be when the flaw is really Nichols's "conducting."

Some of the other good actors who suffer from this fault are Kurt Russell, as Streep's lover, and E. Katherine Kerr and Fred Ward as co-workers. Cher suffers from it, too. I'm not yet sure about her acting (I saw her under the blight of Robert Altman's direction in a Broadway play), but here, as the housemate of Streep and Russell who has a lesbian interest in Streep, she is at least kept from false moves by Nichols.

Inexplicably, the gifted Georges Delerue was imported to write the score. It's hardly a score: not much music is used. Some of it is banjo stuff, to underline locale, and some of it is melodramatic underlining when nuclear dangers arise. Anyone could have written this music: Delerue was wasted.

But dissatisfactions go far past these matters of execution, bothersome as they are. The script by Nora Ephron and Alice Arlen is a compound of compromise, alteration, and misleading implication—all serious matters in what purports to be a true story. On the night of November 13, 1974, Silkwood was driving from Crescent City, Oklahoma, to Oklahoma City to meet a *New York Times* reporter. Silkwood was a lab worker in the Cimarron Plutonium Recycling Facility, in Crescent, owned by the Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation, and she is said to have been carrying revelatory documents to that meeting about safety conditions and quality control in the Cimarron plant. On her way to the meeting, her car ran off the road, and she was killed instantly. Speculation soon rose that she had been murdered to prevent her disclosures. Because no documents incriminating her employers were found, although there were other documents in the car, the murder suspicion seemed confirmed.

I am not remotely competent to sift all the evidence in this matter, but as far as I can make out, no irrefutable proof of murder or document theft has yet been produced although much time has been spent in trying to provide that proof. But this ambiguity has not deterred Ephron and Arlen—and of course Nichols and his producers—from implying heavily that Silkwood had incriminating evidence in the car and that another car came up behind hers on the road and forced her off. (In the film's worst sequence, Silkwood is "canonized" at the end. After we see her gravestone, we get the farewell scene between her and her lover, already viewed, done again in slow motion while on the soundtrack she sings "Amazing Grace.") Also, some published accounts indicate that facts about Silkwood's private life have been al-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Dresser. Better acting backstage than on stage in Britain, 1942. Albert Finney titanic as a star doing his last Lear, Tom Courtenay drily sad as his dresser. (Reviewed 12/12/83)

The Right Stuff. Not quite. But the story of Chuck Yeager and the Mercury astronauts holds as much through resemblance to fiction as fidelity to fact. (11/14/83)

Terms of Endearment. Excellently acted, nimbly written and directed. Intelligent laughs, earned tears in a story of a young woman, her husband, her peculiar mother, and mother's extraordinary lover. (12/26/83)

Yentl. Super *kitsch*. Barbra Streisand as a 1904 Jewish girl in Eastern Europe who masquerades as a boy to enter a yeshiva. She's her best director, and she uses songs ingeniously. (12/19/83)

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tered to make her more popularly acceptable and that her experiences in the plant, with safety practices and with radiation tests, have been nudged a bit one way and another.

All these changes verge on the unethical, the deliberately misleading. E. L. Doctorow altered facts in the Rosenberg case for his novel *The Book of Daniel*, but he made no claim to be presenting that case factually. Quite the contrary: he was using elements of that case as he needed them for a work of art about the large themes involved. No such rationale applies in *Silkwood*. The film was made with the clear intent to tell us the truth about a conspiratorial crime, and it apparently does not.

Conditions at the Cimarron plant seem to have been, according to Congressional testimony and news accounts, horrifyingly careless. No demurral about the "canonization" of Silkwood should be seen as exculpation of Kerr-McGee. (The plutonium plant was closed about a year after Silkwood's death.) But this film pretends to factualism, and the pretense is somewhat hollow.

Part of the fact manipulation comes, I think, not so much from social or political sympathies as from dramaturgic need, the need to make a cogent script out of a life that is hard to organize dramatically. The end of Silkwood's life is shocking, but in the life itself it's difficult to clarify themes without leaning on facts. The film does indeed show her growing awareness of her social situation and its connection with the physical condition caused by her job, but this is not the same as making her something akin to a labor Joan of Arc.

One truth, however, the film does helpfully drive home: middle-class America is a middle-class myth. By millions of filmgoers, America is usually seen as a coast-to-coast suburb, each cozy house with multiple color TV sets and with offspring in college. *Silkwood* is about proletarians who live from paycheck to paycheck and who are vulnerable to brutalization much more direct than that of wall-to-wall-carpeted offices. The characters in *Silkwood* are just on the edge of the people we don't see off-screen, whom they may join from time to time, those people who—according to a plump and double-chinned White House spokesman—don't exist: the hungry. *Silkwood* flubs its main intent, but this side effect is salutary.

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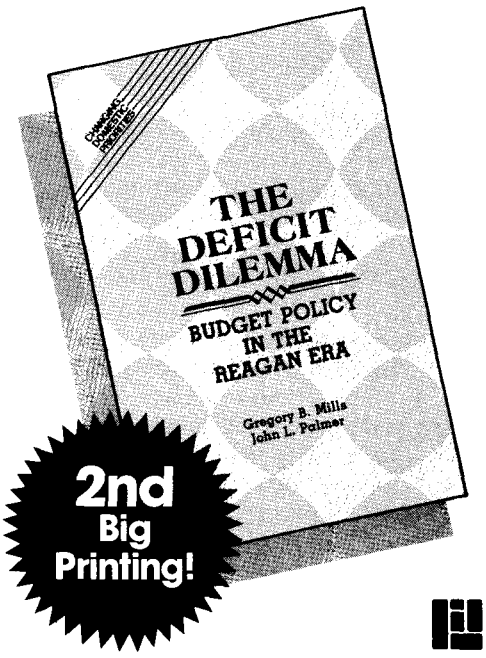

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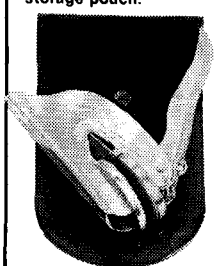

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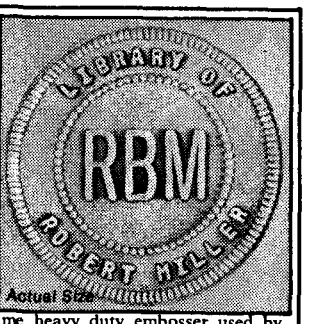

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Walt Whitman on American community.

LIBERTY AND UNION

BY SAMUEL H. BEER

I SOMETIMES ask my black friends, "What would an integrated America look like, if we could get there?" We know in a general way the rules we would like to see observed—rules that would lead to free and equal intercourse between blacks and whites in all fields, political, economic, and social. That is what liberalism requires. It would be in our long-run self-interest. It would set a good example to the world. Altogether, no mean achievement.

But freedom and equality can be cold. People may be free and equal—and strangers. Integration means "to form into one whole; to complete; to perfect." That goal embraces and lies beyond freedom and equality. Roy Wilkins used to say that what he wanted to see was "pepper and salt." A suggestive metaphor; surely better than "melting pot." But what would that mixture mean to the inner life of these diverse human particles? How would it change them? What good would it do them? What good would it do the country?

The questions are not new. Integration is the current form taken by one of the first objectives of the American Republic, "consolidation of the Union," in the words of George Washington. The founders had sought to establish a regime of republican liberty—that is, a government which would protect the individual rights of person and property and which would be founded on the consent of the governed. Such a regime suffered from a central weakness. History and theory warned that republican liberty could destroy itself by reason of the diversity that liberty must breed. The task of government was to concert the power of the people in defense of their liberties. But as their interests multiplied and their opinions divided, how could a government responsive to these interests and opinions achieve such a concert? By what dialectic could the regime of liberty generate the union necessary for its survival?

There was another line of thought holding that diversity could itself be a source of union. The essential idea of a social aggregate in which diverse but complementary parts bring and hold together the whole is as old as Plato. In the history of Western thought it has appeared in many contexts, religious and secular, hierarchical and egalitarian, political, economic, and sociological. From fairly early in the nineteenth century this old hypothesis, transmitted by the romantic movement and adapted to our new democratic circumstances, found expression in American politics and literature. Surely the most powerful version was set forth by Walt Whitman, "the supreme American inheritor of Romanticism," as Justin Kaplan calls him, during the climactic years of the great effort to subvert the Union.

In Whitman's rich utterance, of course, one can find levels of meaning other than the political and social. Yet his vision of the American Union was a passionate and pervasive concern. And what he said is still instructive today. My purpose is not to trace its sources or its influence, but to explore its descriptive and explanatory power. That means taking Whitman seriously as a kind of social scientist.

Both his personal and his professional life stimulated a lively interest in politics. Like his father an ardent Jacksonian Democrat, he became a Tammany regular and stump speaker at an early age. His employment as a journalist in a day when newspapers were highly partisan reflected his political interests. In 1848 he was a delegate to the national convention of the Free Soil Party. In the same year he was fired as editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*, because he had taken up the Free Soilers' opposition to the extension of slavery. In 1856 he supported the first candidate of the Republican Party for President and, of course, the party's second candidate became his political idol and, later on, the subject of his matchless elegy.

As the crisis of the Union deepened, the minds of Walt Whitman and Abraham Lincoln converged, one moving from the negativism of the Jacksonians, the other from the elitism of the Whigs, toward the democratic nationalism of the new party and toward deeply similar conceptions of the Union and what had to be done to preserve and consolidate it. In these same years the genius of Whitman suddenly crystallized into the unique mold that produced *Leaves of Grass*. In the prose in which he explained what he had meant to do and had done in his poetry, from his first sketches of *Leaves of Grass* to "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads" in 1888, his nation-centered purpose predominates.

In the 1855 preface, announcing his purpose, Whitman declares, "The United States are themselves the greatest poem . . . unrhymed poetry . . . [which] . . . awaits the gigantic and generous treatment worthy of it." In his long prose work of 1871, *Democratic Vistas*, after fiercely attacking the vices of the day, he calls on the literature of the future to express that "intense and loving comradeship," that "adhesive love, at least rivalling the amative love hitherto possessing imaginative literature, if not going beyond it," which is "the most substantial hope and safety of the future of these States."

At the time of the first Centennial, he says that in *Leaves of Grass* he has sought to express "this never satisfied appetite for sympathy, and this boundless offering of sympathy, this universal democratic comradeship, this old, eternal yet ever new interchange of adhesiveness, so fitly emblematic of America . . .," by which "the United States of the future . . . are to be most effectually welded together, intercalated, anneal'd into a Living Union." Finally, only four years before his death, he concludes "A Backward Glance" with Herder's comment to the young Goethe "that really great poetry is always . . . the result of a national spirit and not the privilege of a polish'd and select few. . . ."

This view of the function of the poet makes him more an observer and reporter than a teacher, moralist, or prophet. We see its significance if we contrast it with other conceptions of

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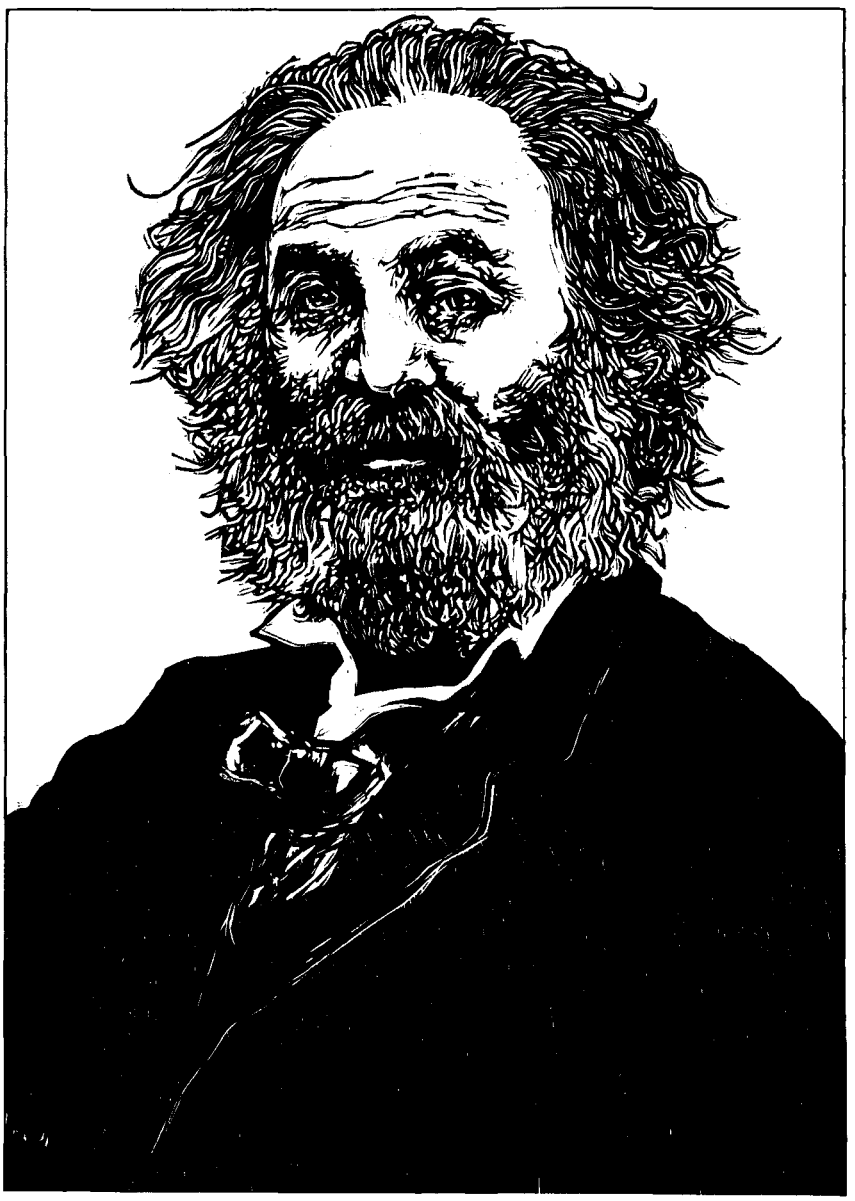
the poet as the archetypal "maker" whose gift enables him to generate new forms and impose them on the world. Shelley's poet-legislator, for instance, is an exceptional figure who, enjoying privileged inspiration, draws from his solitary imagination new values and species of possibility. Whitman did prescribe and moralize; he wanted to influence events. But for him the democratic poet drew his inspiration from, and returned the fruits of it to, his society. Stressing this representative and reportorial role, Whitman says of "the greatest poet": "He swears to his art, I will not be meddlesome. What I tell I tell for precisely what it is. . . . What I experience or portray shall go from my composition without a shred of my composition. You shall stand by my side and look in the mirror with me."

D. H. Lawrence attacked Whitman's poetry for the "provoking of mental reactions." Whitman was not an intellectual in the sense of being a system-builder or academic philosopher. After years of professional journalism, however, he was a penetrating observer, social historian, and political thinker. As a poet he expressed himself primarily in metaphor. But the insights of significant science often begin in metaphor and sometimes end in it.



WALT WHITMAN BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

At the start of *Leaves of Grass* he states the problem of liberty and union in this paradoxical couplet:

> One's-Self I sing, a simple, separate person,
> Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

In the American Republic, as he observed it, persons, individual and separate, were yet united with one another En-Masse. The members of this En-Masse were diverse, variegated, heterogeneous. Whitman observes and approves. "The greatest lessons of New World politics and progress," he says, are "the lessons of variety and freedom." Singing the praises of his own composite self, he exclaims, "I resist anything better than my diversity." His portrait of the En-Masse embraces all the pluralisms, economic, sectional, and ethnic of America at mid-century. Thus the many become one in the celebrated opening lines from the first of the longer poems, "Starting from Paumanok":

> Starting from fish-shape Paumanok where I was born,
> Well-begotten, and rais'd by a perfect mother,
> After roaming many lands, lover of populous pavements,
> Dweller in Manahatta, my city, or on southern savannas,
> Or a soldier camp'd or carrying my knapsack and gun, or a miner in California,
> Or rude in my home in Dakota's woods, my diet meat, my drink from the spring . . .

And so on across the continent to that culminating, annunciatory line: "Solitary, singing in the West, I strike up for a New World."

Whitman's exclamatory enumerations do not always have the charm of those lines; they sometimes read more like a gazetteer or census tract than literature or social science. For example, a little further along in the same poem:

> Interlink'd, food-yielding lands!
> Land of coal and iron! land of gold! land of cotton, sugar, rice!
> Land of wheat, beef, pork! land of wool and hemp! land of the apple and the grape! . . .

The list continues line after line, specifying the variety of American economic geography.

In their love of nature, romantics often reject civilization, especially its modern branches of science and technology, along with the industrial society they produce. Not so this romantic, who welcomes "steamers steaming through my poems," "cities, solid, vast, inland, with paved streets, with iron and stone edifices, ceaseless vehi-

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cles, and commerce. . . ," "the many-cylinder'd steam printing-press. . . ," "the electric telegraph stretching across the continent. . . ," "the strong and quick locomotive as it departs, panting, blowing the steam-whistle." Whitman celebrates the pluralism of American sectionalism and ethnicity. But it is especially in the division of labor of the expanding economy that he finds the diversity that produces union.

He does not deny the material bonds of those "interlink'd, food-yielding lands." The tie that binds, however, is not the economic and instrumental, but that erotic and consummatory bond to which he gives many names: love, sex, touch (the red marauder), fraternity, comradeship, and especially "adhesiveness," a term he took from phrenology. This erotic force is the medium and the motive of the "old, eternal, yet ever new interchange of adhesiveness." Let us look at the "adhesiveness," then at the "interchange." For Whitman's re-enchantment of the bourgeois world arises from his perception of both connection and process.

In his terminology Whitman adopted the distinction drawn by the phrenologists between "adhesiveness," the faculty of friendship or fraternity, and "amativeness," the faculty of sexual passion. In his depiction of the emotional life, however, he recognized, as Freud did later, the erotic nature of the social bond and the continuity of sexual attraction with motivation toward the wider ties of social life. Laying down the premises of his outlook near the start of "Song of Myself," he writes:

> Urge and urge and urge
> Always the procreant urge of the world
>
> Out of dimness opposite equals advance, always substance and increase, always sex,
> Always a knit of identity, always distinction, always a breed of life.

To anyone who wishes to push the analysis deeper, the next lines are an abrupt stop:

> To elaborate is no avail, learn'd and unlearn'd feel that it is so.
> Sure as the most certain sure, plumb in the uprights, well entretied, braded in the beams,
> Stout as a horse, affectionate, haughty, electrical,
> I and this mystery here we stand.

Freud makes much the same reply to this question. Eros, he says, "aims at binding together single human individuals, then families, then tribes, races, nations, into one great unity, that of humanity." "Why this is to be done," he continues, "we do not know; it is simply the work of Eros. These masses of men must be bound to one another libidinally; necessity alone, the advantages of common work, would not hold them together." For Whitman, however, Eros is not merely an urge, not merely an undisciplined impulse of gregariousness. It has a rationale. Eros binds because of what it does and seeks to do. As we might expect of a disciple of Emerson, there is more than a suggestion of the Platonic Eros that moves souls toward perfection by a rebirth in beauty. At times Whitman explicitly uses the language of the idealist logic of identity. As we have just heard him declare: ". . . opposite equals advance . . . Always a knit of identity, always distinction . . ." The process of interchange is the rationale of the connection of adhesiveness. What are the items that are given and received in this process?

One function of those recurring enumerations is to answer that question. In them Whitman identifies the particular things that the poet absorbs from his diverse American experience. Although usually associated with crafts and skills, these items of exchange are not technical, but humane. Whitman calls them "heroic." A true romantic in this respect, he had announced in "Starting from Paumanok" that he would "report all heroism from an American point of view." Accordingly, he asserts in "Song of Myself," ". . . there is no trade or employment but the young man following it may become a hero." In the enumeration of representative American activities in section 15 of the same poem he identifies these heroic traits, usually in verbs and adverbs indicating action, attached to nouns denoting an occupation or activity. Here are five typical lines:

> The pilot seizes the king-pin, he heaves down with a strong arm,
> The mate stands braced in the whale-boat, lance and harpoon ready,
> The duck-shooter walks by silent and cautious stretches,
> The deacons are ordained with cross'd hands at the altar,
> The spinning-girl retreats and advances to the hum of the big wheel.

How would one conceptualize these heroic gifts in a scientific typology? The decisiveness of the pilot; the alert cour-

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age of the mate; the prudence of the duck-shooter; the piety of the deacons; the graceful rhythm of the spinning girl? But, of course, no abstraction can equal the veracity of Whitman's particularization. The interchange that he is reporting, as he repeatedly emphasizes, is not of abstractions but of persons.

> Logic and sermons never convince,
> The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul.

Or more to our point:

> I do not give lectures or a little charity
> When I give I give myself—

And as a person who did write a book which might be suspected of sermonizing, he reassures us that "Camerado, this is no book / Who touches this touches a man."

The gifts that are exchanged are not merely exemplary; they have power. They are not the skill or science or technique that individuals put to work in their occupations; they are, however, the humane powers that enable individuals to acquire and exercise skills and knowledge. The technology of pilotage does not include the gift of firm decision; but it does take decisiveness to make a pilot. Although the science of spinning is not the gift of rhythmic grace, it takes gracefulness to make a spinning girl. Moreover, these gifts not only empower those who possess them; they also, as the items of social exchange, empower others. One cannot acquire from lectures the courage of the harpooner or the piety of the deacons. But one may be encouraged or elevated by actual examples of brave or pious men and women.

In capturing this process the metaphor of exchange is helpful only to a point. Social exchange is not fully analogous to economic exchange. In economic exchange, what I give I no longer have and what I receive you give up. After that brief encounter, the parties are again as separate as before. In social exchange what they give to one another they also keep. As Whitman promises, when in another poem of the mid-1850s he summons his readers to "travel the open road":

> To see no possession, but you may possess it, enjoying all without labor or purchase, abstracting the feast yet not abstracting one particle of it.

In the "interchange of adhesiveness" the outcome is not renewed separation but closer union. The parties do not have something more, they have become something else. In "Song of Myself" at the end of that long and variegated survey of heroic gifts in section 15, he concludes simply:

> And these tend inward to me, and I tend outward to them,
> And such as it is to be of these more or less I am,
> And of these one and all I weave the song of myself.

A fierce egalitarianism pervades Whitman's utterance, as it did the Jacksonian world from which he sprang. This passion came down from what he called "the good old cause," the creed of liberty which denied natural authority to anyone and claimed that each person is capable of individuality—that is, making something of himself. Pervading the diversity that Whitman perceived and celebrated, adherence to the creed of liberty was a massive uniformity in his perception of the nation.

For Whitman, the bonds of union are twofold. On the one hand are the diversities which, so to speak, people the common life. On the other hand are the identities of the American liberal tradition. This collective conscience embodies norms that arouse a passionate response. As norms they define what will and what will not fit into the common life. In those famous debates of 1858, for instance, Stephen Douglas, proclaiming that "our Government was founded on the principle of diversity," held that slavery was included in that diversity. "Why cannot this Union exist forever," he asked, "divided into free and slave States as our fathers made it?" In reply, Lincoln granted that "the great variety of the local institutions in the States, springing from differences in soil, differences in the fact of the country, and in the climate, are bonds of Union." Slavery, however, as "a moral, social and political evil" had no place in those "varieties" which "bind together the different parts of the Union." Slave labor and free labor were not the sorts of diversities that make a complementary national whole.

The exclusions effected by American liberalism are, of course, more subtle

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than this gross contrast. American liberalism is not British or German or French liberalism, but a distinctive specification of the universals of modern liberty. Whitman sometimes dwelt on these exclusions, as when in *Democratic Vistas* he gave a list of the "models" of heroic individuality "adjusted to other standards than America's" that have been produced by other cultures. In his prose and poetry, moreover, he captured the nuances of the American tradition. Consider, for instance, his encomium upon "the common people" in the 1855 preface. Or even more revealing his portrait of the "pure American breed" in "Song of the Broad-Axe" of 1860. Those verses seem intended to praise. Their ambiguities also evoke peculiarly American vices:

> Where the men and women think lightly of the laws,
> Where the slave ceases, and the master of slaves ceases,
> Where the populace rise at once against the never-ending audacity of elected persons,
> Where fierce men and women pour forth as the sea to the whistle of death pours its sweeping and unript waves . . .

WHITMAN'S sense of the redemptive possibilities of social experience is balanced by an acute awareness of limits and complexities. Another mid-1850s work, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," further confirms the realism of this great romantic. In that poem he is boldly and hopefully hypothesizing the continuity of the common life, showing how the American experience is sustained over time as one generation is fused with another and pours its meaning into it. Yet the time of day is twilight; the piece was originally titled "Sundown Poem." And when we look more closely at the substance of the common life portrayed, we must be struck by the mixture of success and failure, adequacy and inadequacy, good and evil. In this twilight, the "glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and sounds" are blotched by "dark patches" which are Dante-esque in their variety. They include the failures of finitude:

> The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious,
> The great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in reality meagre?

They include outright evil, the classic vices of "the wolf, the snake, the hog." Not least among these deficiencies of social life is a withdrawal of love which the speaker here takes on himself, confessing that he too:

> Saw many I loved in the street or ferry-boat or public assembly, yet never told them a word,
> Lived the same life with the rest, the same old laughing, gnawing, sleeping,
> Play'd the part that still looks back on the actor or actress,
> The same old role . . .

UNLIKE some romantics Whitman did not deny these realities. Rather he explored them with sensitivity and fully recognized their presence in the Union. His major prose work, *Democratic Vistas*, contains a corrosive denunciation of the hollowness, depravity, materialism and corruption of the Gilded Age. Abruptly near the end of his most bouyant summons to social adventure, "Song of the Open Road," he reveals that Eros may fail, leaving a self which, living without love and only for external things, is burdened with "a secret silent loathing and despair."

> Another self . . . skulking and hiding it goes,
> Formless and wordless through the streets of the cities, polite and bland in the parlors,
> In the cars of railroads, in steamboats, in the public assembly,
> Home to the houses of men and women, at the table, in the bedroom, everywhere,
> Smartly attired, countenance smiling, forms upright, death under the breast-bones, hell under the skull-bones . . .

Eros endows mankind with the propensity to exchange heroic gifts, excellencies, and virtues. What the actual citizens of the actual republic do a good deal of the time, however, is to busy themselves acquiring from one another the capacity for follies, villainies, deficiencies, and all manner of vices. Leaves of grass may blossom as *fleurs du mal*. The common life can be a dangerous place to raise a child.

The common life in any generation is a patchy achievement. What is ironic, but no less true to empirical fact, these deficiencies are intrinsic to the bonds of national identification in time and space. Heroic gifts come into play only if there is need for them. The vignettes of courage in "Song of Myself"—the faithful skipper, the dying general, the matchless rangers, the unyielding captain—emerge from a context of disaster. If there were no danger, there could be no prudence. If no obstacles, no grace. If no sickness, no loving care. The very "agonies" (Whitman's word) that call forth our best efforts for their relief are embedded in the common life and remain on in the memory of it.

As social science *Leaves of Grass* is a hypothesis about the nature of the American Union. In Whitman's mind the course and outcome of the Civil War confirmed that hypothesis. He had seen the great En-Masse that embraced those millions of domineering individualists, grasping egalitarians, and corrupt democrats. Indeed, reflecting on the test that the outbreak of the war thrust on America, he asked rhetorically: "For who except myself has yet conceiv'd what your children en masse really are." In his eyes, the victory and the way the victory was won by "[t]he People, of their own choice, fighting, dying for their own idea" vindicated his reportage. "Down in the abysms of New World humanity," he wrote,

> there had form'd and harden'd a primal hard-pan of Union will, determined and in the majority, refusing to be tamper'd with or argued against, confronting all emergencies, and capable at any time of bursting all surface bonds, and breaking out like an earthquake.

TODAY the regime of republican liberty displays the same ambivalence. Its diversity is a source of union. Yet the Union cannot be taken for granted. The task of its consolidation remains as urgent in its third as in its first century. Whitman—by the time he joined the Republican Party of Lincoln—believed that there was a major role for government, especially the federal government. Obviously his thoughts cannot provide us with a program; they do suggest a strategy. According to the liberal outlook, diversity is a right and must be protected. Alongside this principle, interest points in the same direction, reminding us that the peculiarities of our own person and group may also need that protection someday. The paradoxical argument of this American romantic is that diversity itself holds out the promise of a common life which may mobilize more consent among the citizenry for the protection of diversity than is accomplished by the calculations of interest or the compulsion of right.

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HEIR APPARENT

Midsummer
by Derek Walcott

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 77 pp., $12.50)

Last October 17, in one of the more unlikely ceremonial moments in the world of poetry, Derek Walcott mounted the high pulpit in New York's Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine to read his "Eulogy for W. H. Auden" (TNR, November 21, 1983). The event was part of a week-long commemoration of the tenth anniversary of Auden's death. What could have been a greater study in contrasts—a powerfully knit black poet from the Caribbean declaiming lines to honor the whey-faced and rumpled don of English-language letters? And what could have been more appropriate? If poets are, by definition, suitors of the Muse, then these two have been, in our age, among her special favorites. They have perceived more than others that she is a woman with a past.

Walcott has been writing poetry for some four decades now. He apprenticed himself to the English tradition and has never strayed far from the declamatory lyrical line. His mentors, the voices that one hears running as a weft through his lines, include the Elizabethans and Jacobeans, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Yeats, Hardy, and Robert Lowell (who himself sought to incorporate that tradition into his work). Reverberating against this diction one hears the local influences, the dialect phrases and constructions of the Caribbean. The whole heritage is there, but it is quickened and jazzed—and entirely unique.

In the crisis-ridden decades of the 1950s and 1960s, when poets took up various cudgels—for free verse, projectivism, beat prosody, confessionalism, a return to American roots, and so on—Walcott's work was little heeded. He was always to one side of the current excitement. But power and craft like his could not be kept off the stage forever, no more than poetry could keep going without its central sustenance: metric structure. In the last ten years, as the productions of our tenured poets have proved increasingly feeble and enervated, Walcott has moved forward to claim his rightful place. *The Star-Apple Kingdom* (1979) and *The Fortunate Traveller* (1981) were both major collections. The poet had found a way to fuse the diction of his masters with his own energetic and sensuous idiom. Now in *Midsummer*, with all the grace and gall of a writer at his prime, he has essayed the most hazardous of ventures.

Midsummer is a fifty-four-poem sequence that was written over the course of two summers in Trinidad. We don't need a calculator to figure out that's about a poem every other day—and these are solid seventeen-to-thirty line compositions. Poets have been known to compose at such a rate—think of Byron, Neruda, Berryman, or Lowell in his *Notebooks* period—but it is hardly common practice. The risks are so obvious: repetition, slackness, the stretching of material. But Walcott has taken them on for a shot at the rewards—velocity, immediacy, and freshness. And he has upped the ante by avoiding dramatic progression or continuity of subject. These are the meditations of a middle-aged prodigal son, nothing more. The intent is evident. By taking away drama, subject, and any sort of finishing varnish, Walcott is forcing the full weight of scrutiny onto the lines. The poetry has nothing to hide behind—no tricks, no feints. It's an all-or-nothing gamble, and it succeeds.

Poetry in recent years has become more and more bound up with the magazine industry. A poet puts out twenty or thirty separate "pieces" and then collects them into a book. The ancient tribal song has been groomed and pomaded until it looks like a whisper. *Midsummer*, ragged-edged and robust, is anything but a magazine book. Its lines are like the links of a chain saw moving through the broad trunk of a life. We are to look at the cloven bole, its rings, whorls, and irregularities. Connections and links have not been engineered—they are implicit and organic. If there are chips and splinters, so be it. Walcott would have it no other way. Here is his own metaphor:

> My palms have been sliced by the twine
> of the craft I have pulled at for more
> than forty years.
> My Ionia is the smell of burnt grass, the
> scorched handle
> of a cistern in August squeaking to rusty
> islands;
> the lines I love have all their knots left in.
> —XXV

Midsummer: boredom, stasis, the harsh afternoon glare of self-assessment. Midsummer equals mid-career, middle age, Dante's "*mezzo del cammin di nostra vita. . . .*" The only real narrative prop that we have for any of these numbered poems is given in the first. The poet, comfortably identified with the "I" of the speaking voice, is returning by air to his old island home. The plane descends over "pages of earth . . . canefields set in stanzas," and as the wheels touch the tarmac he exclaims:

> It comes too fast, this shelving sense of
> home—
> canes rushing the wing, a fence; a world
> that still stands as
> the trundling tires keep shaking and shaking the heart.

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Walcott has the Ovidian gift; his compressions, associations, and transformations appear effortless. So, in this poem, the jet is likened to a silverfish that "bores . . . through volumes of cloud," clouds are linked to the coral shapes below, and both become "pages in a damp culture that come apart." As the clouds part to reveal the island, while the jet's shadow ripples over the jungle "as steadily as a minnow," Walcott suddenly wrenches open the frame to apostrophize a fellow poet.

> Our sunlight is shared by Rome
> and your white paper, Joseph. Here, as everywhere else,
> it is the same age. In cities, in settlements of mud,
> light has never had epochs.

But two lines later he is back, noting "steeples so tiny you couldn't hear their bells." Space and time are like baker's dough to this man: he kneads, stretches and punches them as he sees fit. Nor is he afraid to hook a thought to its prompting detail, however unlikely the connection. His faith in the elasticity of the metered line is complete.

THE POEMS that follow are no less various in their internal composition. Though mainly grounded in the Caribbean, and attentive to local detail, they are as diverse as Walcott's own nature. There are passages of intense expressionistic observation—

> Monotonous lurid bushes
> brush the damp clouds with ideograms of buzzards
> over the Chinese groceries.
>
> —VI

side by side with solemn brooding—

> I can sense it coming from far, too, Maman, the tide
> since day has passed its turn
>
> —XV

and sudden celebratory surges—

> Midsummer bursts
> out of its body, and its poems come unwarranted
> as when, hearing what sounds like rain, we startle a place
> where a waterfall crashes down rocks. Abounding grace!
>
> —VIII

The range is restricted only by the circumstances of compressed composition and the psyche's inevitable recurrences.

The visual is one strong component in Walcott's work. He has a painter's eye for shape and color value and a strong sense of proportion. Descriptive elements in the poem are arranged as if words and their sounds were equivalent to pigments:

> Gnats drill little holes around a saw-toothed cactus,
> a furnace has curled the knives of the oleander,
> and a branch of the logwood blurs with wild characters.
> A stone house waits on the steps. Its white porch blazes.
>
> —XXV

This structure and detail-oriented instinct can be said to represent Walcott's objective pole. But the subjective counterpart is there in equal portion. Sharply etched descriptions give way to dark surges, upright consonants lean over like palms in a storm. At times Walcott will flash back and forth between the two poles, at other times he will force them into fusion. These are his supreme moments—when he modulates into passionate declaration:

> O Christ, my craft and the long time it is taking!
> Sometimes the flash is seen, and a sudden exultation
> of lightning fixing earth in its place; the asphalt's skin
> smells freshly of childhood in the drying rain.
> Then I believe that it is still possible, the happiness
> of truth . . .
>
> —XIII

If nothing is rarer in poetry than this note, it is because nothing is riskier. Full-throated ease is something our culture has unlearned.

IT IS impossible, of course, to give a fair account of a cycle like this. Walcott is trying to fix, in sharp, living lines, the particular texture of his inner life during the course of two summers. The ambition carries certain hazards in its train. A certain monotony, for one thing. Reading the undifferentiated stanzas from start to finish can be like wandering around in a rain forest. There is something almost vegetal in the proliferation of Walcott's lines. How can anyone produce so many naturally flexed hexameters so quickly?

Walcott is not, of course, blind to the repetitious nature of his project—he wants it to be that way. He tests the constraints of subject that seem to inhere in metric verse, but he does so from within. Like Cézanne, who painted hill after hill because hills were not what he was interested in, Walcott writes poem after poem with little differentiation of subject. His settings and descriptions are, in a sense, pretexts. He would like to throw out as much as possible in order to clear a path to his real subject: language becoming poetry.

Poetry, like speech, is a complex connivance of sound and sense. The lyrical ideal is a condition in which the two are seamlessly joined. Or, better yet, a condition in which it becomes clear that sound is a kind of sense, and vice versa. For as sense is proper to the mind, so sound is to the heart. And the heart, as great lyric poets have always known, is the tribunal before which reason lays its spoils. "To betray philosophy," writes Walcott, "is the gentle treason / of poets. . . . " He is reducing, or eliminating as much as possible, the ostensible subject of the poem, so that the plaiting movement of sound and sense can show itself. This is not an evasion of subject so much as a deeper perception of the poet's function.

WALCOTT IS re-establishing the sound, the music, as a connection to felt and perceived experience. When he writes:

> The oak inns creak in their joints as light declines
> from the ale-colored skies of Warwickshire.
> Autumn has blown the froth from the foaming orchards,
> so white-haired regulars draw chairs nearer the grate
> to spit on logs that crackle into leaves of fire.
>
> —XXXVI

he is promoting the status of sound as meaning and is arguing against the notion that meaning is some kind of detachable content. The treason of poets is to believe that sonorousness and rhythmic emphasis establish a body-circuit through experience that reason alone cannot achieve.

Walcott writes a strongly accented, densely packed line that seldom slackens and yet never loses conversational intimacy. He works in form, but he is not formal. His agitated phonetic surfaces can at times recall Lowell's, but the two are quite different. In Lowell, one feels the torque of mind; in Walcott, the senses predominate. And Walcott's lines ring with a spontaneity that Lowell's often lack:

> White sanderlings race the withdrawing surf to pick,

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with wink-quick stabs, the shellfish between the pebbles.

—XLVIII

There is not a single forced emphasis. The lines are at once mimetic—the "withdrawing surf" is perfectly off-set by the "wink-quick" beaks—and perfectly natural.

Though Walcott is very much aware of the assaults that modernism has waged upon the metric line, he has elected to work with its possibilities. In part this is a matter of temperament. But there is also the matter of the poet's unique relation to the English language. He acquired in the Caribbean an English very different from that spoken by his counterparts in England and America. Not only is the region a linguistic seed-bed, with every kind of pidgin and dialect, but successive waves of colonization (and oppression) have left phenocrysts of all descriptions. As Walcott said in a recent interview in *The Threepenny Review*:

> . . . it's very hard for people to understand my love of the Jacobean—it's not from a distance. If you hear a guy from Barbados, or Jamaica, speaking English, and you listen to that speech, you hear seventeenth-century constructions. I once heard in *Henry V* a soldier speaking in a Yorkshire dialect and it sounded like pure Barbadian speech.

Walcott's traditional metric is more than a simple act of homage to the past—it is the most expeditious way for him to organize his complex linguistic heritage. Controlled by a firm structure, each element of that heritage can declare itself. And the various distinctions, as anyone in the third world can testify, are not just historical; they are political as well:

for so much here is the Empire envied and hated
that whether one chooses to say *"ven-thes"* or *"ven-ces"*
involves the class struggle as well.

—XLIII

There is no one writing in English at present who can join power with delicacy the way Walcott can. He is the outsider, the poet from the periphery, but it may be time to center the compass at his position and draw the circle again.

SVEN BIRKERTS

Sven Birkerts lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has essays forthcoming in *Parnassus* and *The Iowa Review*.

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CHINESE DESPAIR

A Cadre School Life: Six Chapters
by Yang Jiang
translated by Geremic Barmé

(Joint Publishing, 91 pp., HK$15)

In Chekhov's letters, there is one passage where the writer gives some advice to an actor who was taking, in one of his plays, the part of a desperate man. As this actor had a tendency to overplay the character—screaming, wringing his hands, rolling tragic eyes—Chekhov made him observe that a man who is truly experiencing despair keeps very quiet, and merely stands by the window, whistling softly.

The Chinese have known for ages this aesthetic principle of "less is more"; actually, they brought it to an extreme degree of refinement. The expressive understatement has become one of their main literary and pictorial devices. In Chinese poetry, for instance, one can find a good example of this in a famous short poem by Xim Qiji (twelfth century)—the piece is sublime, take my word for it, but it would need a poet to translate it, and I can merely offer a prose paraphrase. The poet first explains how, in his youth, when he had not yet tasted sorrow, he loved to strike romantic postures, climbing on high balconies from where he would sing imaginary sorrows that he invented for himself in order to compose new poems. But now, as life eventually made him empty the bitter cup of sorrow to its last dregs, he refrains from talking—or, if he has to speak, he merely says (and this is the last verse of the poem): ". . . the weather is lovely, what a beautiful autumn!"

If you wish to hear the latest news of the beautiful Peking autumn, read Yang Jiang's *A Cadre School Life: Six Chapters*. Yang Jiang is a very distinguished old lady; she is a playwright; she translated Cervantes into Chinese. She is the wife of Qian Zhongshu, a famous scholar and writer—arguably one of the greatest minds of our age. At the end of the "Cultural Revolution," like all their academic colleagues whose crime was to be intelligent and educated, Yang and Qian were forcibly separated and sent to the countryside. In the political context of the time, and considering their age and frail health, it was reasonable to expect that they would die while breaking stones and carting manure. But another whim of the authorities brought both of them back to Peking two years later; furthermore, the unpredictable course of Chinese politics was eventually to allow Yang Jiang to write and to publish an account of her deportation, eight years after these events.

These *Six Chapters* are written with elegant simplicity. The author talks softly, with a touch of humor, without ever raising her voice. She tells of the modest misfortunes and humble happinesses that formed, against a background of mud and misery, the everyday fabric of her exile. In a jail, the minutest accidents of life acquire a flavor and a significance that, in our careless freedom, we hardly perceive anymore. Philip Roth, talking about Eastern Europe, accurately described this situation: "In the West everything goes and nothing matters, there, nothing goes and everything matters."

This slim little booklet is easily read in one sitting. Paradoxically it is also heavy with all that it does *not* say. Its weight cannot be solely explained by the peculiar density which every object, each incident acquires in the emptiness of captivity; it is also the product of a massive understatement. Yang Jiang, of course, is one of these subtle artists who knows how to say less in order to express more, but in her case, this aesthetic reserve is further reinforced by a political taboo. We should remember that the People's Republic of China has invented the ultimate form of censorship—a censorship that is not enforced by any specialized agencies (which do not even exist in China) but, in a way that is far more economical and efficient, its responsibility is directly entrusted to every writer individually.

Yang Jiang lived through a disaster whose very magnitude paralyzes the imagination. Yet, today in China, it would be dangerous for anyone to attempt to explore the origins and the implications of this catastrophe. The lunatic decision taken by Mao to carry out a mass deportation of all intellectuals, on the sole ground that they were intellectuals, (more than 20 million people were affected by this order) has probably no equivalent in all history, if we except of course the deportation of the Jews by the Nazis, and the deportation of the educated population of the Cambodian cities by the Khmer Rouges (the latter, by the way, were consciously trying to emulate the Maoist model).

Yang Jiang deliberately limits her narrative to her own narrow individual experience, and this experience itself is never described in full, but merely suggested through a series of fragmentary, disconnected notations, sketched with sparse brushstrokes. The broader context of collective madness in which her ordeal took place is only hinted at; we accidentally glimpse its oblique refraction here and there, but never confront it face to face. To put it in theatrical terms, the only backdrop of the *Six Chapters* consists of the tiny setting in which the author believed for a while that she would have to spend the rest of her life: all that we see on stage is a lame wooden bed in a crowded hut, loaded with all her wretched belongings, like the raft of a shipwreck, or again, a muddy corner of the vegetable garden where she tried so hard to grow a few turnips—which the starving peasants of the neighborhood would steal even before they had the time to mature.

ONLY A FEW characters cross this familiar little world. Luckily, her husband is living in a neighboring camp. Sometimes the old lovers can take advantage of their everyday drudgery to meet clandestinely and chat for a few minutes behind a hedge. The real action is unfolding entirely outside the book: from time to time, indirectly, we hear remote rumbles and muffled shouts that rise from backstage. The news that a beloved relative or a close colleague has just committed suicide is disclosed as if by accident, it is put apologetically between parentheses, and yet these ominous echoes are enough to remind us of the existence of this invisible outside world that is sinking into terror and lunacy. However, the author always cuts short these allusions and returns at once to the touching and ridiculous little happenings of everyday camp life: the misadventure of the old poet who dropped a bar of soap in the soup, how the inmates built

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their latrines to see them immediately looted by the local peasants, how the author adopted a puppy dog and was then forced to abandon it.

Yang Jiang's exquisite art had certainly no need for official recognition. Yet the Communist authorities thought it fit solemnly to commend her achievement; they extolled it as an example to follow, as (in their own words) her book "shows a wound, yet utters no complaint." Indeed. This last stroke brings irresistibly to mind one of the most bitterly Chinese of all political anecdotes: in the Tang dynasty, the younger brother of an official prepares to leave for his first posting. He promises to his elder brother that he will be utterly circumspect and patiently obedient in all his dealings with his superiors: "If they spit on me, I shall simply wipe my face without a word." "Oh no!" replies the elder brother, terrified. "They might take your gesture for an impudence. Let the spittle dry by itself." This utterance has entered the common language, as a proverb (*tuo mian zi gan*); it describes a reality that remains very much alive today, and Yang Jiang's quiet smile can provide one of its latest and most heartbreaking illustrations.

SIMON LEYS

Simon Leys is the author of *Chinese Shadows* (Viking).

LIBERTY, FRATERNITY, ART

Representations of Revolution (1789-1820) by Ronald Paulson

(Yale University Press, 416 pp., $29.95)

1789: The Emblems of Reason by Jean Starobinski translated by Barbara Bray

(University Press of Virginia, 298 pp., $24.95)

The nutshell version of the French Revolution may be found in Jean Renoir's stirring film *La Marseillaise*. At one point, two weather-beaten sons of toil sit listening obediently while a revolutionary orator attempts to ignite their enthusiasm by rhapsodizing about the dawn of liberty. "Why do they always go on and on about the dawn of this and the dawn of that?" says one. "It's because they're usually in bed when it happens," says the other.

This is what Ronald Paulson would call the discrepancy between the fictive and its historical referent, and Jean Starobinski the encounter between the light and the dark faces of revolution. To you and me, the meeting between claptrap and cannon fodder. For a very long time now, historians of the French Revolution have concentrated on the latter, believing them to constitute the gritty social reality of the event. Accordingly, their subject matter has been concrete: the composition of crowds, the fluctuations of bread prices, the tempo of popular violence, the penal machinery of terror. A century of this sort of research, though, has only generated a massively informed uncertainty. The classic Marxist account of the French Revolution as a struggle between thwarted bourgeois and obscurantist nobility has been shown to be imaginary. If the Revolution was not class conflict, however, what was it? Words, says a new generation of historians, taking its cue from the social science of language. Rhetoric, they say, hot air, like the gas that wafted Montgolfier's balloon over the Bois de Boulogne. The Revolution was what its orators imagined it to be, though their notions were periodically modified by bruising encounters with the people they so freely apostrophized. Away, then, with the classic sociology of the late nineteenth century, and on with the semiotics and structuralism of the twentieth. Now the subject matter is Text and Signs, propaganda (visual and verbal); the ritual of revolutionary feasts and ceremonies; the symbolic paraphernalia of the new order arrayed on playing cards, costumes, eating utensils.

As historians have moved toward interpreting the Revolution as a cultural phenomenon, so a faction (perhaps only a groupuscule) among art historians has endeavored to understand works of art as political or ideological acts. This has produced a peculiar convergence between "idealist" historians and "materialist" art historians, but the result has in any event already been extremely fruitful. Paulson's and Starobinski's books both represent an early harvest from what promises to be a rich crop of works on art in revolution.

The crop, however, divides into two very different varieties: small potatoes and hothouse wonders. Historians, who are professionally nervous of dabbling in aesthetics, not to speak of formal analysis, have been strictly small potatoes specialists, dealing with the workaday evidence of what may be called manifestly political culture. Occasionally, when paintings are incontrovertibly acts of propaganda, they have plucked up the courage to deal with bona fide masterpieces, like David's *Marat assassiné*. For the most part, however, they are resigned to scrabbling around among the dreary commissions of revolutionary orthodoxy, the majority of which were at best artistically nondescript, at worst frankly hideous.

This sort of cultural scavenging is not for the likes of Paulson or Starobinski, who remain happily locked in the hothouse. Their exemplars of the revolutionary ethos consist exclusively of the luminaries: David, Blake, Wordsworth, and (more implausibly, in Starobinski's book) Mozart and Gian-Domenico Tiepolo. While much more aesthetically gratifying than the small potatoes, the hothouse does have its problems. The former is compromised by the banality of its sources, but the latter suffers from the uncertainty of attributing expressly political motivation and meaning to genuine works of art. The difficulty is indicated already in the publishing data of Ronald Paulson's book. The person who determined its description for the Library of Congress Datafile, perhaps after much head-scratching, decided to hedge all bets and listed the book as "Revolutions in arts and arts in revolution," as if they were interchangeable.

Of course they are not. Indeed, both books directly confront the problem by asking whether there is in fact any anal-

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ogy to be discovered between the style of the French Revolution and the style of art at that time. And Paulson goes still further by pondering what kind of art could have been devised that could possibly represent a wholly unprecedented event. Neither book produces a wholly satisfactory answer, and this may be because the question is itself anachronistic. Revolutions in public affairs do not necessarily entail radical alterations in style, much less generate them. In both France and Russia revolutionary regimes turned rapidly from an initial euphoric experimentation to a more serviceable conservatism that could better be utilized for propaganda. In fact, it is at least as plausible to maintain that experiment and innovation thrive better under moribund and incompetently patrolled absolutisms than under the more vigilant thought-controllers that succeed them. Houdon's bust of George Washington, included in Starobinski's book as an example of the celebration of revolutionary heroes, is in fact an eloquent testimony of how easy it was for the French ancien régime to keep company with them (provided they were anti-British). The visionary architects Ledoux and Boullée, whom Starobinski invokes as epigones of the revolutionary spirit, certainly qualify as Jacobin by virtue of their subjection of the individual to the authority of colossal geometry. But, as the author admits, it was the old regime, and not the Revolution, that employed them, and on the not very subversive tasks of building customs barriers and salt works which insurrectionary crowds were only too eager to demolish.

IF THESE figures who were undoubtedly influenced by the notion of a didactic architecture seem doubtful embodiments of a "revolutionary style," how much more problematic are some of the other luminaries who figure in both works. Of the painters treated, perhaps only David is an uncontestable case of a "political" artist. And even the *Oath of the Horatii*, which is now taken as a kind of pictorial manifesto, was painted in 1784-85 as a royal commission, and it is by no means established as a call to insurrection. Both writers, then, may be well aware of the naiveté of equating political and stylistic revolution, but both do at times invoke a kind of revolutionary ethos which, especially in Starobinski's book, settles like a romantic fog on the contemporary imagination. Identical features are then made to emerge from the mist to form the topography of the revolutionary sensibility: the Manichaean contest between radiance and darkness; the analogy between natural and political upheaval; the confusion of libertine and libertarian.

In most respects, though, as even the expressive typefaces will show, these are two very different books. In Starobinski's work (originally published ten years ago in French) the prose style is dashing and poetic; the tone one of a happy excursion around the masterpieces of the late eighteenth century. Technicolor clichés of the late De Mille genre occasionally intrude ("Time was running out for the aristocratic republic of Venice"), and an excessively orchidaceous view of the French eighteenth century in which "the privileged classes, increasingly drawn toward extravagance and immorality" succumb to a collective death wish. A sort of poetic determinism runs through the book in which sundry works of art are swallowed up in a *Geist* gravid with revolutionary immanence. Sometimes the attributions strain credulity, as when Fuseli's famous *Nightmare* is offered (though without much conviction) as possibly an "allegorical denunciation of the uneasiness hanging over England in 1782." With Starobinski, one is in the presence of an urbane and eloquent guide; a master practitioner of the old-fashioned skills of *Geistesgeschichte*. The argument is best left to relax in an armchair along with the reader, for when the "cultural revolution" is treated as pre-ordained, it sinks to the level of a sumptuous tautology.

Ronald Paulson's book is different altogether, at once more ambitious and more provocative. Its typeface is half the size of Starobinski's; this is just as well, since the author has read everything imaginable on this subject and presents the reader with an almost overwhelming array of erudition. His footnotes alone constitute a small encyclopedia of reference. The tone throughout this work is that of the academic seminar. The intellectual approach is more fashionable than Starobinski's, being Freudian-deconstructionist. Lay readers should then beware the dangerous impediments strewn

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through the Text—*bricolage, enjambment, données, referents,* and *catachreses*—on which the semiotic ignoramus may stub his toe. Try this, for example:

> Blake has now passed from the catachrestic image as transvaluation of counter-revolutionary terms to its representation of the ambiguous or paradoxical process of revolution itself.

Paulson's style of instruction is so severe that it sometimes feels like one is being frogmarched around an art gallery by members of the Yale Comparative Literature Department hell-bent on rending canvas to discover within it the *ur*-Text. But in the end it is Freud who prevails over Harold Bloom as (inevitably) it emerges that revolutions proceed from oral and anal phases to the oedipal revolt of son against father—except that in Spain's case it all happens the other way around. This being so, revolutions get to devour a good deal of unappetizing matter along with their children, and while Professor Paulson leaves no orifice unexamined, the mouth seems to be his favorite. By the time the reader reaches what, for Paulson, is the crucial study of Goya's *Saturn Devouring his Children,* and is offered the insight that it may in fact be the Father-god completing his own fellation by munching on his member, he may be pardoned for collapsing on the couch and crying *"l'art pour l'art!"*

Not everything, happily, is in this vein. The book is in fact rich in original insights, and the byways of its argument are at least as fascinating as its highways. Often what seem to be incidental details—such as the derivation of the Grotesque from the underground grotto—turn out to be an ingenious and fresh interpretation of familiar matter. The title of the book turns out to be deliberately ambiguous since it is much less concerned with the French Revolution itself than with the response of outsiders—English and Spanish—toward it. The chapter dealing with France offers a helpful synthesis of much new research on the Revolution interpreted as a cultural transformation (or "transvaluation" in Paulson's words), but confidence is shaken somewhat the third time that the Tuileries become Tuilleries; and Mauconseil turns into Manconseil, and Billaud Varennes is introduced as Billard.

It is with Paulson's discussion of the English reaction to the Revolution that the real business of the book gets under way. Some of those selected to embody that response—Blake, Burke, Wordsworth, Paine—are traditional sounding boards of opinion. But no one could possibly accuse Paulson of slavishly following received wisdoms. All of these enthusiasts and antagonists are given strikingly unorthodox readings of different degrees of persuasiveness. Where there is an obvious text, such as Blake's *America,* it is avoided in favor of a startling new interpretation. Paulson argues that it is in "The Tyger," that standby of the schoolboy repertoire, that Blake attempts to represent the dual countenance—savage and pure, tiger and lamb—of the Revolution. There are many such unorthodox versions. Rowlandson's earthy comedies in drawings and prints are somehow turned into exercises in social subversion by way of the voluptuary manners attributed to members of the pro-revolutionary circle of Charles James Fox. Gillray, whose work as a cartoonist was much more overtly political (and who stands badly in need of scholarly study), paradoxically yields less, as Paulson rightly detects in his indifferently vitriolic pen a delirious loathing of the entire world of public posture.

SOME OF these interpretations strain too hard to discover connections with the French Revolution for poems and paintings that were contemporary with it but were not necessarily dominated by it. Starobinski's contention that "so vivid is the light given off by the Revolution that it illuminates every contemporary phenomenon" is a relic of the historiography in which there could be no private or provincial experience untouched by Grand Events. Richard Cobb, for whom the Revolution was "no more than a college meeting before and after which life went on very much the same," has taught us (at the other extreme, perhaps) to resist the sort of holism in which all experience (including art) must be at the mercy of the pub-

LEARNING TO TALK

He is bent over, crouched like a sparrow bird of prey,
looking at the ground. He chatters in the short
syllables of the untaught, piquant sharps and long
drawn-out whooshes of breath, as he pokes with his stick
some object I cannot see. A sowbug, or a spider;
a worm, perhaps. Suddenly, his voice rises, irritated
tightenings of his belly punctuate the air. His stick
jabs harder, with greater surety of mark. "Go,"
I hear him say. Then louder, *go;* and, not yet old enough
to use language to hide in, he begins to cry.
The stick hangs limply in his hand, and in his face
I think I see disgust, or misery. It clears quickly
and assumes the child-hurt that can be fixed. When I
hug him, I know it will be like this from now on—
that what I can fix does not count. But, I think, it is only fair.
It is only fair that he should learn what we all learn, that I
do not have to be the one to teach him this. That the pleasure
of full sound will not always make up for what fails, for what coils
in the pit of the stomach and comes out again in the uneasy
skinny wishes of retribution. *You never listen. I am alone*
too much of the time, come back. Please come back. I can see in him
those same gray-ringed pupils, the round forehead,
the same walk. Especially
the same walk. There is nothing a voice can do
against the mute will of bones and muscle, the flesh
you never thought you could miss so much, whose absence
you never get used to. We stop missing voices, too soon maybe.
But the body, we never forget the body.

TRAISE YAMAMOTO

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lic world. Did the slide of the guillotine or the cannon of Austerlitz really sound louder than the clack of croquet balls or the tide of tittle-tattle at the Brighton Pavilion? Even supposing it did, the cultural historian needs more than imaginative internal readings of either images or words to persuade him, and certainly more than the atmospheric juxtaposition that Starobinski offers. What is striking to small potatoes types like myself is the disregard of any kind of external historical evidence about the circumstances in which such works were commissioned and executed. Only such evidence can corroborate or qualify such interpretative suppositions. The lack of such evidence I take to be the deconstructionists' famous and principled prostration before the autonomy of Text; but when it allows of internal readings which attribute to artists meanings of which they may have been wholly innocent, it seems more like an act of critical colonization.

THIS DIFFICULTY becomes acute in Paulson's treatment of Goya, the longest essay of his book. Just because Goya's work departed so astonishingly from all contemporary norms, and because he was a direct witness of terrible events, historians and art historians have been irresistibly drawn to find causal connections between public and private trauma, and a correspondence of both in his progressively more feverish style. This is anything but straightforward, however, and Paulson is sometimes inclined to take short cuts. *Saturn* and *Judith executing Holofernes*, the "black paintings" that decorate (if that is the word) the nightmare walls of the Quinta del Sordo, are said to be responses ultimately to the execution of Louis XVI, and to the notion of the revolutionary people "devouring" their enemy / father / king. This may make some Freudian sense, but to be historically plausible it presupposes Goya having seen a particular cartoon of Gillray's, "*le peuple mangeur des rois*," in the collection his friend Moratin brought from England. We have absolutely no way of knowing whether this was indeed the case, and since Moratin remained an *afrancesado* it seems in fact unlikely. But Paulson treats this (and many other equivocal matters) as self-evident, and presents the case with a good deal of categorical assurance.

To be sure, Goya set out as a partisan of reform in Bourbon Spain and produced the *Caprichos* with indisputably polemical intentions. But where he ended up is much less clear. It is not at all certain that the convulsions through which his style evolved were primarily responses to public events, as Paulson wants us to believe. Something called the "Spanish Revolution" is invoked to account for what was, by any historical account, an extremely protean career. Goya served as portraitist to the Bourbon court, the Bonaparte usurper, the Duke of Wellington, and the patriotic liberals (like Palafox) and, finally, the archreactionary Ferdinand VII. In fact the stunning *Massacre of the 3rd May*, not discussed by Paulson, which is conventionally taken to be his protest against tyrannical brutality, was designed to surmount the triumphal arch of the exceedingly brutal Ferdinand's return to Madrid in 1814. There was no such thing as a Spanish revolution. If, to accommodate what Paulson describes as Goya's regression toward oral-anal sado-masochism, it is thought of as a reaction, then the definition of revolution has finally been elasticated so far that it has snapped. In the end the author concedes as much by admitting that "I have been using the word revolution because we are in the period of the French Revolution," whereas "only the artist was revolutionary in the sense of proceeding with a plan for reconstruction—not of society, which he is only mirroring, but of his art."

THREE HUNDRED and eighty-four pages later, then, it emerges that art, particularly in the hands of distressed genius, transcends, rather than conforms to, the vicissitudes of public experience. In fact, in his declining years Goya did the very opposite of expose himself to the public world, and instead immured himself in an intensely private dwelling where the specters he had tried to exorcise in the *Caprichos* revenged themselves by taking possession of his reason.

Ronald Paulson's argument is offered with a kind of adamant certainty that the profusion of his own extraordinary scholarship itself belies. He fails to impose connection on the merely adjacent, causality on the merely contemporary. Yet the scholarship in which his argument is housed provides an exceptionally rich and stimulating offering. Many will now follow where Paulson has pioneered. And for them, too, it will probably be the intellectual journey and not the arrival that will matter.

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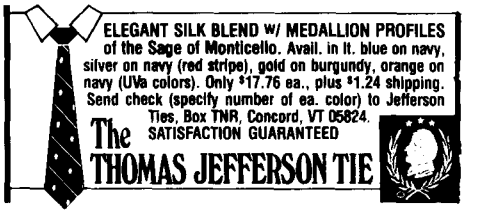
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THE REPORT CARDS

The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture by Sara Lawrence Lightfoot

(Basic, 399 pp., $19.95)

High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America by Ernest L. Boyer, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

(Harper & Row, 363 pp., $15)

Newsweek spotted the problem in May: America's schools were bad and getting worse. "Can the Schools Be Saved?" asked the gloomy cover story. "The evidence of decline was depressingly easy to find," noted *Time* that same week. These dark thoughts had been prompted by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, which had just concluded that "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity." The problem was so severe that it had extended even to the National Commission on Excellence in Education ("presently" means soon, not now).

Immediate action was clearly needed. So the nation's leaders got together and, over the summer, solved the problems in America's schools. By the first week of October—when the new school year was just a few days old—*Time* had already published a cover story announcing good news: "America's Schools Are Getting Better." It made for a grim summer, the national crisis in education. Now that it's over, the books under review will be chiefly of historical interest. On the other hand, it may be that reports of our schools' rebirth are greatly exaggerated.

Several years ago, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, a professor at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, had the reasonable idea that a study of good high schools might turn up something interesting. She selected two urban public schools, two suburban public schools, and two elite private schools, and, with the help of various graduate students, spent three years examining and writing about them. Lightfoot's field is sociology. In *The Good High School*, however, she aspires to something grander, a kind of intimate portraiture "that would combine science and art" and "be concerned with composition and design as well as description." Unfortunately, her book is very nearly unreadable.

Lightfoot's most annoying verbal tic is an addiction to pairs of words cemented with conjunctions: "Benson seeks to be even-handed and current in his criticisms and support, searching for the most relevant and precise evidence of success within and across departments." There's a sentence like that in nearly every paragraph. Frequently, she lapses into sociologese: "In these portraits, then, goodness is seen as a holistic dimension whose interpretation requires an embeddedness in the context." Her style is so virulent that people she interviews sometimes come down with the same disease: "Without material props or aesthetic surroundings, most teachers appeared to structure their own ethos by the power of personality and curricular substance. Said one to me, 'When I'm teaching I live in the existential present. We inhabit that space and it becomes ours.' "

Lightfoot is also exasperatingly vague. She never really explains how she selected her six schools, or how long she spent studying each one, or even what she means by "goodness" in education. The excellence of the schools is more or less taken for granted. At New York City's John F. Kennedy High School, "Principal Mastruzzi compares the full plate of offerings to the meager menu of most other urban high schools and points to yoga, cycling, roller disco, jogging, slimnastics and winter sports as a few of the special goodies." Lightfoot seems to agree with the "many students" who believe that the physical education department is "the best part of Kennedy," but she doesn't pursue the implications. Since Kennedy is a "good school," what it does must be "good."

Writing about George Washington Carver High School, a low-income, all-black school in Atlanta, she waxes lyrical about a faculty member who for thirty years has been teaching "what he knows best to over eighty students majoring in dry cleaning." What it means that dry cleaning has such a central position in the school's curriculum is a question she never addresses squarely. Although she acknowledges in a concluding chapter that "Carver still lags behind many other Atlantic high schools on indices that reflect the substance of education, curricular design and structure, and pedagogical processes," she never seems to see the picture whole. Is Carver merely "lagging behind" those other schools—implying that it's on the way to "catching up"—or do school systems systematically doom urban blacks to be dry-cleaning majors or the equivalent?

The Good High School is occasionally enlightening in spite of itself. Lightfoot's portraits reveal how indelible class and color lines are in American education. St. Paul's and Milton Academy, the two private schools in the study, have three black faculty members between them. Brookline High School is proud of its ethnic diversity, but there are no blacks in its Advanced Placement classes. At Chicago's Highland Park High School, Lightfoot writes, "the community is proud that its public high school can effectively compete with the elite private academies for the colleges of choice," but only thirty-three of the school's twenty-four hundred students are black. The tiny handful of black teachers at Kennedy (enrollment: fifty-three hundred) sit together at one table in the faculty cafeteria. At all-black Carver, the big course is dry cleaning.

"Goodness" in American schools seems to require a sort of educational apartheid. Lightfoot circles this point occasionally, but she never lands. Her guiding principle is that if you just look at something long enough, you'll find nice things to say about it: "Certainly, most faculty [at Kennedy] are quick to admit their preferences for the more rewarding experience of working with

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bright and gifted students and their discouragements, even despair, in teaching slow learners," she concludes. "But the despair is rarely expressed in disdain or defeat. Teaching may proceed at a snail's pace, but some teachers and students learn to recognize and appreciate the almost invisible progress."

Lightfoot's impulse is always to praise, no matter how improbable the circumstance. At Highland Park, drugs seem to be a problem. "Even with the help of several colleagues, it is not unusual for Kline [the school's 'chief psychologist'] to hospitalize five students in a week's time." Sounds grim, but Lightfoot finds the silver lining: "In fact, one could say that Highland Park is an unusually good place for troubled youngsters. Teachers, counselors, and administrators work collectively and seriously to save souls." They must be doing something right if they can get that many kids to the hospital every week.

In an afterword called "The Passion of Portraiture" she writes, in a style that by now has become entirely her own, "The personal dimension of the portraits and their literary aesthetic qualities create symbols and images that people can connect with, offer figures with whom readers can identify, and ground complex ideas in the everyday realities of organizational life. This textured form may serve as a catalyst for change within an institution." It's impossible to imagine this book being put to any such use.

'HIGH SCHOOL' is the Carnegie Foundation's report on American public secondary education. Under the supervision of Ernest L. Boyer—the foundation's president and the author of this book—Walter Cronkite and twenty-seven other distinguished advisers spent two years visiting high schools and reporting on what they found. "Meanwhile, the foundation's staff reviewed the literature, visited schools, and talked with educators from many sectors." Then, a "team of twenty-five educators" (including Sara Lawrence Lightfoot) dispersed to study fifteen "pre-selected" schools for twenty days each. Reports were submitted, meetings were held, and a final paper was prepared. Finally, Boyer took the paper and the field studies and used them as "the basis for many of the observations and conclusions" in this book, drafts of which "were reviewed by our trustees and a wide circle of respected colleagues." The end result is a step-by-step prescription for improving American public high schools.

Actually *High School* shows surprisingly little evidence of the Brobdingnagian effort that apparently went into it. Boyer's style is clipped and telegraphic, and his recommendations sometimes seem to come from nowhere. He explains in his foreword that he has changed the names of all the schools in the study (although you can tell from reading Lightfoot's book that one of them, "Rosemont," is Brookline High), but he seldom refers specifically to any of them; it's as though he'd spent so much time with his research that when he finally put pen to paper he could no longer bear to slog through it all again. If Boyer is sometimes a man of few words, moreover, he is a man of many statistics. "Since Sputnik circled the earth in its solitary orbit," he writes in his prologue,

> more than 40 astronauts and 50 cosmonauts have logged over 7 years in space. Nearly 5,000 objects are now orbiting the earth; more than 3,400 of them are officially listed as debris. The space shuttle *Columbia* can carry a 65,000-pound payload, 353 times the weight of Sputnik.

Each sentence is duly footnoted, in case the reader doubts that the world has changed so dramatically in the last quarter-century.

Back on earth again, more than a few of Boyer's ideas seem reasonable, although you can get the hang of most of them simply by reading pages 301 to 319, a boiled down "agenda for action." Clear goals, mastery of language, core curriculum, single-track teaching, more respect and better pay for teachers, less bureaucracy—you can probably finish the list yourself. Most of these ideas have been around for some time. Coming up with them has always been less the problem than putting them into effect. For example:

> To improve computer material for education and to fulfill what we, quite frankly, believe to be a moral obligation, we recommend that every computer firm selling hardware to the schools also establish a special instructional-materials fund. Such a fund would be used in consultation with classroom teachers to develop high-quality, school-related programs.

Still, Boyer has some solid suggestions. He is probably wise when he counsels high schools not to leap into the computer age (although he underestimates the magnitude of the new technology when he compares the advent of computers to the earlier emergence of teaching machines, televisions, and talking typewriters). There's no sense in stockpiling Apples if you don't have teachers who can show students how to use them, or if you can't afford to repair them, or if you don't have decent software to run on them.

BOYER IS adamant about eliminating multiple-track teaching. "Putting students into boxes can no longer be defended," he writes. "To call some students 'academic' and others 'nonacademic' has a powerful and, in some instances, devastating impact on how teachers think about the students and how students think about themselves." He advocates "eliminating the vocational track" and requiring "all students—not just the college bound—[to] complete a core of common learning." I think this is a sound and humane suggestion. Boyer cites a survey that found "essentially no difference in employment advantages between male graduates of high school trade, industry, and business programs, on the one hand, and male general education graduates on the other." As much as he dislikes tracking, though, Boyer can't quite get it out of his system. Later he advocates establishing "Residential Academies in Science and Mathematics" for gifted students. "Such schools should receive federal support since, clearly, the vital interests of the nation are at stake. . . . [T]here is also a need to serve exceptional students in other fields, especially foreign languages and the arts." I may be wrong, but this sounds suspiciously like tracking by other means. Moving black kids out of dry cleaning and into academic courses isn't progress if you're just going to move the white kids into federally funded prep schools. Of course, access to the special schools would be "equal" for all; but you don't have to have been around very long to know how the cards would fall. Just look at the schools in Sara Lawrence Lightfoot's book.

DAVID OWEN

David Owen, author of *High School: Undercover with the Class of '80* (Viking), is writing a book about the Educational Testing Service.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Year of the Pol

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL doesn't approve President Reagan's decision to take "full responsibility" for the October Beirut bombing disaster (the editors think he's letting the military off the hook), but nevertheless characterizes it as "a noble gesture." An alternative interpretation is that Reagan deserves full responsibility for the Lebanon morass, but there is nothing noble about his gesture in taking it. After all, nobody's going to court-martial him. By contrast, any further inquiry into the matter would surely do Reagan nothing but harm, by reminding voters again and again of Lebanon in general and this tragedy in particular, no matter who finally was assigned the blame. By ostentatiously and illogically taking the military responsibility, Reagan is helping himself to avoid the political responsibility, which is all that matters to him.

I DON'T SHARE THE NEW REPUBLIC's enthusiasm for the Lebanon enterprise, but Walter Mondale's U-turn last week does not impress me. In an interview Monday he said about the Marines, "I would not pull them out of Lebanon right now." Saturday he announced he would pull them out right now. In the style of his old boss, Jimmy Carter, there was no explanation of why he had changed his mind, or indeed any acknowledgement that he *had* changed his mind. But we can be confident that this decision, however abrupt, was not precipitate. The Mondale campaign does not allow for caprice. I imagine some giant computer in Mondale headquarters, continuously monitoring all the factors that go into the candidate's positions on the issues. At 5 A.M. Saturday morning it suddenly starts to beep-beep. An issues technician rushes to the screen: the effect of the cold wave on crops in Iowa, combined with Jesse Jackson's visit to Syria and the deaths of two elderly Jewish voters in Miami, have shifted the "Troops in Lebanon" function from a "Yes" to a "No" modality. By 5:07 A.M., the night staff has alerted the candidate and thirty-seven advisers, who are teleconferencing, and at exactly 5:13 A.M., the clatter of electronic printers begins: "It is time to withdraw the U.S. Marines from Lebanon. . . ."

TO THINK THAT the election year is just starting. Is it more than you can bear? You're not alone. Politicians and the journalists who write about them often forget how little interest people have in their carryings on. One nice bit of evidence for this has been the mediocre box-office performance of the movie *The Right Stuff*. When I saw it, I concluded that the publicity surrounding John Glenn's Presidential campaign was going to do the movie a lot more good than the movie was going to do Glenn's campaign. This was completely wrong. According to *Variety*, what's killing the movie is that, thanks to the publicity, people associate it with politics instead of outer-space adventure. Politics is something you put up with, not something you pay five dollars for.

MORE EVIDENCE comes from the island of Grenada, which is between politicians at the moment, being ruled by a nine-member "advisory council" appointed by the Governor General, Sir Paul Scoon. According to a report by Seth Mydans in *The New York Times*, most Grenadians seem to like it that way. Mydans quotes one citizen declaiming at a local bar, "wagging his finger in the air for emphasis," and uttering sentiments I think we all share: "We, the majority of drunkards in the West Indies, don't want no elections. We want it like it is now. We want our peacekeeping force. We want our Governor General. We want our nine-member thing." As if to demonstrate that great minds think alike, this very same point is made at somewhat greater length by Theodore Sorensen, former speechwriter for President Kennedy, in a forthcoming book entitled *A Different Kind of Presidency*. Sorensen, writing in a style that is the rhetorical equivalent of wagging his finger in the air for emphasis, proposes that the United States should be spared political debate for the next four years and should be ruled instead by a "temporary bipartisan 'Grand Coalition' of national unity." Sorensen's nine-member thing is to be called a Presidential Advisory Council of Elder Statesmen. The only trouble with Sorensen's plan is that if there's anything less appealing than a politician, it's a self-styled Elder Statesman. At least our Grenadian friend had the decency to admit that he was drunk.

JESSE JACKSON'S VISIT to Lieutenant Robert Goodman, imprisoned in Damascus, brought another eerie advance in the dynamics of modern celebrity. Several of the American hostages in Iran became celebrities for the prescribed fifteen minutes after their return to the United States. Lieutenant Goodman got the star treatment while he was still a prisoner. There he was last week in a blaze of television lights, palling around with Jackson, cracking jokes with reporters, mugging with a funny T-shirt for the photographers, and then, presumably, back to his cell: prisoner with a name. Did it gall him, before his release, that the other participants in this ritual, also citizens of an enemy nation, got to return to the Damascus Hilton when the show was over, and go home without Assad's permission? Like those daily TV interviews with Arafat when he was "besieged" in Tripoli, it made the whole Lebanese imbroglio seem weirdly artificial.

UNESCO'S MISTAKE, in retrospect, was taking on the press. There were plenty of other charges in the indictment against the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization—too many overpaid bureaucrats with not enough to do, too much third-world bombast, Soviet influence, bias against the United States, vicious hatred of Israel. But all of these apply just about equally to other U.N. agencies, including the General Assembly itself. But if Reagan pulled out of these, you could still, just barely, count on high-minded editorials . . . whatever its faults . . . last best hope . . . peace between nations . . . and so on. UNESCO's campaign for a "New World Information Order," which left little room for quaint Western cultural artifacts such as freedom of the press, caused even (or rather, especially) the most high-minded Western journalists to lose their cultural relativism, and their patience.

M.E.K.

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